AMERICAN SERIES.

PRINCE LUCIFER.

BY

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ocean-nest out of which so many Hawkstones have come."

He pressed her to his side. He was a blonde, *débonnaire* fellow, with an unmistakable air of birth and breeding. His face resembled the portraits of Charles Stuart. In the languid blue eyes lurked that far-away, melancholy look which is said to foreshadow an early death. He had elegant white hands, a caressing voice, and the yellow curls of an Apollo. In his day Philip Hawkstone had made many a woman's heart ache.

His bride was a Creole—born on a far plantation by the side of a Louisiana bayou. She possessed all the witchery and languorous grace of her kind—eyes of darkest velvet, a skin like a tea-rose, a Psyche shape and a heart of fire.

As Jetta Hawkstone stood by her husband's side on the deck of the *Siren*, that Summer day, the sun shone upon no woman more lovely, more beloved—none to whom life opened up greater vistas of happiness—none, alas! over whom a sadder doom was even then hanging!

"It is strange that I should have won you from all your Southern lovers, Jetta," said Hawkstone, lightly. "I little thought, when I accepted Gabriel Ravenel's invitation to spend a few weeks at his father's plantation——"

"Oh," she interpolated, "you two were friends at some Northern college, Philip!"

"Yes, love. As I was saying, I did not suppose my visit would end so disastrously for Gabriel, or that I should bear back to the North the girl he loved—the girl he was trying to win for himself. I wonder if he wears the willow with becoming grace."

A shadow fell on her fair face.

"Poor Gabriel. Don't speak of him in that flippant tone, Philip."

He laughed.

"The subject fascinates me. I realize that I have converted a former friend into a deadly foe. He will never forgive me for winning your love. His regard for the laws of hospitality alone prevented him from killing me

outright at the bayou. As it was, he did the next best thing—demanded satisfaction with swords and pistols at six paces, and all that."

"Philip!—oh, Philip!"

"Don't tremble, dearest—dueling is obsolete—I declined the honor; whereupon your Southern fire-eater swore vengeance—swore to have my life somewhere in the near future. Well, I forgive him—I dare say I might have done worse, had he been the lucky suitor, and I the unlucky one."

Her white hands closed nervously round his arm.

"Foolish, hot-headed Gabriel! I had been his father's ward for years. I cared for him only as a brother—this he knew quite well. He should have been more reasonable—you had done him no wrong."

"A rejected lover is *never* reasonable, my darling. Look! look!"—his languid manner growing suddenly eager—"yonder is Tempest Island, the birthplace of I know not how many generations of Hawkstones, bought from the Indians by old Durick Hawkstone, a soldier of fortune, who had won glory in Flanders with Lord Fairfax, and for the two centuries since his death kept by the eldest male heir of the line 'in tail,' as the old wills read. It seems a bleak spot to your eyes, does it not, my Southern rose? But every Hawkstone looks on it with pride."

A long, gray object had risen in the ocean path of the *Siren*, and now rapidly assumed shape and color before Hawkstone and his bride. This was an island, eight miles long and three or four broad—originally a tongue of the main land, tradition said, but torn from it by the constant encroachments of the sea. It was made up, as it seemed, of low cliffs and tumbled hills, gray moors and patches of primeval forest. As the yacht turned toward the landing-place, on the sheltered southwest shore of the island, the ancestral home of the Hawkstones sprang into view, situated on a slope that descended in broad wooded terraces to the beach, and there terminated in a massive sea-wall, built by the black slaves of some colonial Hawkstone. An ancient house of hospitable aspect. Time and sea-winds had imparted a mellow hue

to its gray stone walls. The high gables and red chimney-stacks gave it the appearance of an English manor. Behind it, windmills stretched their arms in the sun, and herds of cattle fed in the rolling pastures.

"In me," said Hawkstone, lightly, "you see the sovereign of Tempest Island. The hundred souls that make up its population are all my servants and dependents. As I have told you, old Durick Hawkstone left the island 'in tail' to Guy, his eldest male heir, and to the first male heir following for ever; and Guy, at his own demise, re-expressed the entail. Others, coming after, rigidly adhered to the custom; so, for generation after generation, Tempest Island has descended from father to son in one unbroken line of succession."

Eagerly she looked out on his little kingdom.

"It is beautiful!" she cried. "I am sure I shall be happy here, Philip. Your Southern rose means, for love's sake, to take firm root in the soil of this Northern island."

He bent his blonde head, and kissed her remorsefully.

"I wish to Heaven that I was more worthy of your love, Jetta!" he muttered. "See! my people have come down to the wharf to welcome us. Nearly all of them were born on the island—many have grown gray in the service of the Hawkstones."

Yes, the wharf was alive with men and women in holiday attire—happy, contented-looking people. Among them, yet noticeably apart from all others, stood a tall, gypsy-faced girl, with a red cloak flung over her tar-black hair, and eyes like living coals, hungrily fixed on the approaching yacht. Some strong emotion had turned he brunette face to the hue of ashes. Presently one of the island women went up to this young person, and whispered, not unkindly:

"Yonder the master is coming with his new wife. You'd be better off at the Inlet house, Peg Patton, than standing here watching for him. Didn't I tell you, six months ago, that Philip Hawkstone would never stoop to marry his overseer's daughter?"

The girl grew a shade paler.

"Everybody is wise after a thing has happened," she answered, sulkily.

"Peg, Peg, he's like all his kind—quick to love, quicker to forget."

"Yes, he's fickle enough," sneered Peg, "as the woman coming yonder will soon find out. Sorrow and trouble are waiting for her on the island. She'll stare both in the face before another day goes by."

"You jade! You look as wild as a hawk! What mischief are you hatching?"

"I owe him something, Moll Derby," hissed the girl. "He said I was his equal before he went on that Southern journey—said I was fit to marry any man—said I ought to be a queen for my beauty."

"And you believed him, simpleton? Served you right, say I! Everybody on the island warned you. Don't you know they all talk that way? but when it comes to taking a wife, they choose their own kind. Philip Hawkstone, you may be sure, has had enough of low marriages."

Peg Patton made a gesture of rage and misery.

"Go away!" she groaned. "Stop talking to me and go away, or I'll push you into the water."

The *Siren* grated against the wharf. Hawkstone and his Southern bride stepped ashore. The loyal islanders crowded around the pair with cries of "Welcome home, Mr. Hawkstone!" "Welcome back to the island, and your lady with you—bless her handsome face!"

He was like a prince in the midst of his subjects rather than a plain American gentleman returning to his own estate from a short journey.

He must shake hands with every one, from the oldest to the youngest. Peg Patton stood awaiting her turn. When it came she drew back a step, and gave the island lord a look that made him quail.

"What! will you not shake hands with me, Peg?" he said, good-naturedly.

"I'd die sooner!" she panted, with eyes like Damascus blades.

"Nonsense! There are some trinkets for you in my

luggage. Jetta, my dear, this girl is the daughter of my late overseer. He died in my service. You must be a good friend to Peggy."

"I will, indeed!" answered the young bride; but Peg recoiled in a white heat of anger.

"You liar!" she hissed in Philip Hawkstone's blonde, insouciant face; "you false traitor! I want no friendship with you or your bride. I see! she is a blazing beauty, and a lady born—one of your own kind, sir—not like *me*. I hate you both! I curse you both! I hope to Heaven that neither of you will ever know a happy day on Tempest Island, and something tells me you never will—you never will!"

CHAPTER II.

AT MIDNIGHT.

JETTA HAWKSTONE stood dumbfounded at this outbreak. Her husband laughed carelessly.

"My poor Peg, what a vixen you are, to be sure! It's plain you haven't improved in temper since my departure. Do you still live with your blind grandmother at the Inlet? I must find a husband for you among my thrifty island lads."

"You will find no husband for me, sir!" cried the girl, "for, as God hears me, I'll never, never marry!" And she gathered the red cloak closer about her face, and turned and vanished in the crowd.

"Come, Jetta! don't let this trifle annoy you," said Hawkstone, and he led his bride under a stone gateway, and up the shady terraces to the house.

"Who was that girl, Philip?" she asked, very coldly and seriously.

"I told you her name," he replied, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Six months ago—quite before *your* time—I flirted with her here on the island—a trifle—a mere trifle, not worth mentioning! She has the very deuce of a temper, and, somehow, she got it into her silly head that I was going to marry her—just like the sex!" growing aggrieved. "I always had the luck of getting into

all sorts of scrapes with women—never looked twice at one in my life without she seemed to expect an immediate offer of marriage—of course, I do not mean *you*, love. But don't give the jealous jade another thought—it's really too absurd."

A cloud had passed over Jetta Hawkstone's fair day. Tempest Island grew dark and ugly and threatening before her changed eyes.

"Philip, why did you not tell me?"

"Tell you," he echoed, petulantly; "there was nothing to tell, Jetta. I did not blame you for Gabriel Ravenel's jealous passion—why should you be less reasonable in the case of this ridiculous island girl? Doubtless every man has his secret follies. If you take this matter seriously, I dare not think how later revelations may affect you—I shall scarcely find courage"—with a forced laugh—"to disclose my more heinous offenses. There, love! don't look so troubled—we have reached our own threshold—enter, and leave unpleasant things behind you. Here you are queen of all you see, as well as of my heart."

The main door of the stone mansion stood wide open. All the household, headed by Mrs. Otway, the housekeeper, a motherly little woman in gray serge, gathered in the porch to welcome the bride. Philip Hawkstone and his "Southern rose" entered a hall with rafters, wainscot and floor of age-darkened oak. The crest of the Hawkstones was carved on the wall. In a fireplace, built of big, square brick brought from Holland, a wood fire burned on this Summer day—the air of Tempest Island seemed always cool. From the hall the drawing-room opened—a wonderful old apartment, filled with relics and heirlooms out of number. A harpsichord and a spinet hobnobbed with luxurious French chairs and sofas. Faded portraits by Copley and Reynolds hung on the walls. The brass-bound cabinets were full of documents signed by old royal governors—patents, commissions and land-grants, on parchment, discolored with age. Further on, in the raftered kitchen, a grand dinner was in progress—fish from the sea and

game from the wood, and every delicacy known in city markets, for the island was but a few miles distant from the mainland. In accordance with an ancient custom, Mrs. Otway presented the keys of the house to the new Mrs. Hawkstone, and each servant bobbed a courtesy, and wished the bride much happiness. After all, it was a cheerful home-coming, in spite of Peg Patton.

Presently Jetta Hawkstone ascended a shallow stair to a chamber paneled in cedar, where Salome, the black "mammy," who had followed her mistress from the land of rose and orange, was already unpacking trunks and boxes.

"I 'spect we're come to stay, honey?" she grumbled.

"Yes, Salome."

"'Pears like yo' 'll never seem at home hyar. 'Tain't de ole plantation. Marse Gabriel, he's dead gone with grief 'fore this, an' ole marse and missus, too, honey."

Mrs. Hawkstone colored.

"My place is henceforth here — not there, Salome. Already this island is dear to me, because it is my husband's kingdom and — mine. I love him more than home or friends — more than life itself—I am almost afraid to think *how* much I love him!"

And she threw herself on the old slave's neck, and burst into sudden tears.

Salome soothed her fondly.

"Hush, honey, hush! Yo' spoil yo' pretty eyes. Forgit all 'bout Marse Gabriel, an' let Salome comb yo' hair an' dress yo' fine for dinner. Marse Philip, he t'inks nothin' ever like yo' beauty, honey."

She dried her eyes, and permitted Salome to array her in a dinner-dress of lace and peach-blow satin. By the time this was done Hawkstone entered. His languid face grew radiant at sight of the fair young shape before the toilet-table.

> "'And soon his eyes had drunk her beauty up,
> Leaving no drop in the bewildering cup,
> And still the cup was full,'"

he quoted, softly. "Come, my darling, it still lacks a half-hour to dinner. Come with me. Your Philip has a

confession to make, and something to show you. I cannot conceal the truth from you longer, even if I would, and, indeed, it is best that you should know it at once."

In vague alarm she permitted him to lead her across the passage to another chamber. Before he could open the door she heard on the further side a sound that startled and perplexed her. It was the laugh of a little child. Philip Hawkstone beckoned her over the threshold into a nursery, luxuriously fitted up. Two persons occupied it—a nurse, in a cap and apron, sewing in a window, and a golden-haired boy playing on a rug surrounded with costly toys. At a sign from Philip Hawkstone the nurse arose and left the room. Then the lord of the island turned to his bride.

"Jetta," he said, "this is my son—the child of my first marriage. Basil"—to the boy—"come here. I have brought you a new mamma."

She stood as if thunderstruck.

"Your first marriage, Philip! You never told me——"

"True—I dared not. I knew your religious scruples. I feared I might never win you. It was cowardly, of course, but I loved you too much to take the risk."

She grew pale.

"Religious scruples? I do not understand, Philip. What religious scruples could I feel against marriage with one whom death had made free?"

"Ay, there's the rub," he answered, lightly. "This boy's mother is not dead, Jetta. I married her five years ago. It was a supreme mistake. She was far below me in social station, and I soon discovered that I had never really loved her; that she was in no way a fitting mate for a Hawkstone. We separated a little more than twelve months after our union; and before I ever saw your face, Jetta, the divorce court had freed me from my wife absolutely and for ever, and given this child to my care. I found myself at liberty to marry again. I married *you!* Forgive me that I had not the courage to tell you sooner."

She drew back a step. It was a stunning blow to the fond, happy bride of a few days.

"Oh, Philip!" she exclaimed; "how cruel of you to deceive me in such a matter!"

"You would not have married me, Jetta, had you known the truth."

"True—true!"

"Then you see it was necessary for me to deceive you, darling," he said, lightly. "Come, you are truly and legally mine. I have not wronged you in any way. Do not be angry with me, or I shall wish the island, and all upon it, buried in the sea."

He tried to take her in his arms, but she held him back.

"That person—where is she now, Philip?"

"I do not know. I have not seen her since the divorce."

"How *could* you rob her of this child?" turning suddenly to the golden-haired boy, who, with a toy horse clutched in his dimpled hand, stood staring at the two, his angelic brows knitted in a frown.

"His mother was not fitted, either by birth or education, to take charge of the heir of Tempest Island," answered Hawkstone, coldly. "Basil, kiss your new mamma, and promise to love and obey her always."

"I won't!" said the child.

"Do as I bid you, and at once, sir!" commanded Philip, in an ominous tone.

The boy fixed his gray eyes defiantly on his sire, and did not move an inch.

With a sudden cry, Jetta swooped down upon him, gathered him into her lovely arms—into the lace and satin of her white bosom, and half smothered him with kisses.

"You poor, beautiful darling!" she murmured; "whatever comes, we will be friends. Love me, little Basil, as I promise to love you."

Something in her exquisite face—in the warm rain of kisses that fell upon him, softened and won the child's heart. His arms closed round her neck, his yellow head fell on her shoulder. From that hour the two were sworn allies.

Hawkstone looked on impatiently. He had small affection for this son of a discarded mother. His whole thought was how to make peace with his new bride. He pushed the child jealously away.

"Jetta," he said, "you already know something of the Hawkstones — they are a passionate, headstrong race. It has been said that there was never a happy marriage among us—wedded misery is the family doom. I was a foolish, infatuated boy when I married Basil's mother—I grew tired of her—love became aversion—I panted for my freedom, and—won it! Can you blame me, because I determined when I saw you, to rectify at any cost the mistake I had made—because I hungered for my share of happiness, like other men——"

"Wait!" interrupted Jetta. "Did she tire of you also—was the aversion mutual?"

He colored.

"Yes, yes," he answered, hastily; "it was a perfect case of incompatibility of temper. As I was about to say, darling, I determined to marry you first, and afterward throw myself on your forgiveness. Can you reproach me for striving to change the destiny of the Hawkstones, for, mark you, I knew if I succeeded in winning you, Jetta, one, at least, of my race, would be able to boast of a fortunate marriage?"

She looked up into the face of the man she loved—a weak, careless face, but wonderfully handsome in its passionate pleading, and, woman-like, her anger melted, like wax before a flame.

"I forgive you, Philip," she answered.

> "'To be wroth with one we love
> Doth work like madness in the brain.'

Have you any more revelations to make?" shuddering. "First it was the girl Peg Patton—her dark, wicked face haunts me still, Philip," and she passed her white hands quickly across her eyes. "I am sure she would like to kill me. And now this story is infinitely worse than the other. Oh, *is* there any more?"

"I should hope not!" Philip Hawkstone answered,

lightly. "You have heard enough, I am sure. Don't look so tragic, love. 'Pon my soul, I have now made a full confession of my sins."

Two large tears rolled slowly from under her dusky lashes.

"I *feel* tragic, Philip. Something tells me I have known my last of earthly happiness."

He grew impatient.

"Do not say that. You and I will defy the family doom—we will laugh at the fate which has so long pursued my race. I hate tears—I hate sad looks, darling. We are young, strong, rich—we will be madly happy now, and to the end of our days. You need not be troubled with this child. I shall keep him and his nurses on the island for the present, but fortunately I have other places of residence—town-houses and country seats on the mainland. Rest assured that I will not have Basil near you, to remind you that you were not first in my heart."

His tone jarred upon her.

"Don't, Philip! He is most lovely—I am already fond of him—poor little thing! He has your eyes and hair—he shall not be neglected."

Philip Hawkstone lifted his eyebrows.

"As you like. Now that you have forgiven me, Jetta, we will never allude to the subject again. There's a shadow still on your face, I see; let me kiss it away."

But he could not. It was there long after the pair left the nursery and sat down to dine. In spite of herself, the thoughts of the Creole bride wandered persistently to that wild island girl, Peg Patton, with her gypsy face and furious eyes—to the unknown wife whom she had unconsciously supplanted. Where was little Basil's mother? Did she know that another had taken her place in Philip Hawkstone's home? Did she yearn for the golden-haired child? Jetta, reared in a faith that abhorred divorce, shivered involuntarily. She had made some dreary discoveries this day. Would the burden of them ever be quite lifted from her heart?

After the sumptuous dinner, served from ancient plate

and French porcelain, Hawkstone led his bride to a wainscoted library, and there drew her forward to look at a curious old window, scratched over with strange characters.

"See!" he said; "on this glass the officers of the French fleet, which once anchored in the roadstead outside the island, cut their titled names with their diamond rings—D'Estaing, Lauzun, Chastellux, Deux-Ponts and the rest—count, marquis, chevalier, all of the blue blood of old France. The Hawkstone of that day was a zealous rebel, and he entertained the Frenchmen royally; but, unluckily, he had a fair young wife, and she drowned herself here after the departure of the gallant young officers—all for love of one of their number. Another illustration"—shrugging his shoulders—"of the matrimonial luck of the Hawkstones!"

By-and-by Salome brought a white burnoose, flung it over her young mistress, and the wedded pair sauntered out into the porch, matted now with rose-vines in full bloom. White moths flashed through the overlapping leaves, birds chirped faintly in hidden nests. Night had fallen on the sea and over the island—a still, hot, oppressive night, with neither moon nor star; but on every hill, and along the low cliffs and beaches, the islanders had lighted fires in honor of their master's return. The red flames cast an uncanny glare on the darkness—the whole island was illuminated. Nearer at hand sounds of conviviality issued from the great kitchen of the mansion. Immense tables were spread, and whosoever would might taste the hospitality of Tempest Hall to-night.

"Plainly your island people love you, Philip," said Jetta Hawkstone, as, standing under the roses, with her hand in her bridegroom's, she watched those blood-red fires shooting up to the black sky.

"Yes, I fancy they do, better than I deserve," he answered, nonchalantly. "It is not the habit of the Hawkstones to waste much time or attention on this island. We of the present day infinitely prefer life on the mainland. We come here in times of joy, in times of peril, and we come here to die; but that is about all."

She started.

"*To die!* Oh, Philip!"

He laughed at her sudden terror.

"I mean, my darling, that when we are seized with mortal illness, and feel Death approaching, we hurry to Tempest Island to meet him. It is a custom of the Hawkstones, borrowed, perhaps, from the savage beasts that creep away from their fellows into the wilderness for the same purpose. Why, you actually tremble! Thank God, you and I, love, are so young that we need not think of death for many years to come. Hear that thunder out on the sea! There will soon be a tempest that will put out the jubilee lights of my good islanders. How thick and oppressive this night is!" throwing back his shoulders, as though suffocating. "One can scarcely breathe in it. Heaven above! what is that?"

The great garden lay before them, lighted only by the distant glare of the bonfires. Jetta turned in time to see something dart across the flagged walk in front of the porch—a shape, black, swift, noiseless—seen one moment with a white, gleaming face turned on the bridal pair, the next gone!

"Was it not one of the island people?" said the Creole bride. "Everybody seems to be abroad to-night."

To her surprise he broke from her and leaped down with nervous haste into the flagged walk.

"No, it was none of the island folks!" he cried. "I am sure of it! Derby!" calling to a stout, middle-aged fellow who had entered the garden by the side gate, "have you met any one unknown to you? Is there a stranger on the island to-night?"

"Lord bless us! No, sir," answered Derby, lifting his hat to Mrs. Hawkstone, "we h'ain't no welcome for strangers here—least of all at a time like this, sir. I've seen no one but that wild jade, Peg Patton, with her cloak over her head, ambling round to the kitchen to take her turn at the good things."

"Fetch a lantern and search the grounds, Derby!" commanded Hawkstone, in an agitated voice. "I am convinced that something is wrong."

The man hurried away. Jetta looked wonderingly at her husband.

"Surely, Philip, you do not attach any importance to so small a matter?" she said. "Just the flitting of a shadow across your garden path? Are you sure that you know these island people so intimately that you could not fail to recognize one of them under such circumstances?"

He looked strangely pale.

"I am sure of nothing! I had one of those cursed impressions that sometimes overcome a man without warning or reason," he answered, trying to laugh; "an impression that some monstrous evil lurked near us, darling, and was embodied in that flitting, indefinable shape. There! it is gone now!" in a voice of intense relief. "There is tempest in the air. Perhaps the electric currents have something to do with my mood."

They could see Derby and his lantern darting hither and thither through the garden, down even to the sea-wall and out upon the beach. He came back, at last, with a crestfallen air.

"I've beat the bush, sir, but hide nor hair of anything can I find!" he cried. "Must have been some of the house-folks. Did you notice if 'twere man or woman, sir?" But neither Hawkstone nor his bride could tell. "Maybe 'twere a sweetheart gallivanting after one of the kitchen maids, sir; sich things will be," said Derby. "By the great horn spoon, here comes the rain, and the folks on the beach will get wet skins! Is it your pleasure that I should look further, sir?"

"No," answered Philip Hawkstone, "no!" And as the rain began to patter down on the garden leaves he retreated into the house, drawing Jetta after him.

They passed the evening in the old library. The storm did not break at once—it grumbled and muttered, threatening, reluctant. A half-hour before midnight the two descended to the Cedar Chamber. At the door of the nursery Jetta whispered:

"Let us look at the child."

He followed her into the room. A shaded lamp burned

on a table, and little Basil lay asleep in a pretty white bed, under a curtain of silk and lace, his yellow curls shining on the embroidered pillow, his chubby hands still clasping a favorite toy. He had gone to bed in ill-humor, as it happened, and a tear still glistened on his cheek. Jetta bent and kissed it away.

"I foresee that you will spoil him," said Hawkstone; then the two went on to their own chamber.

The red bonfires soon leaped and flashed along the downs and the beaches; the thunder muttered. Now and then a long, lamentable blast of wind and rain tore through the garden, and died away on the sea. The island folks came hurrying up from the shore, laughing and chattering as they came. These were the last sounds audible in her small, sea-girt world this night, as Jetta Hawkstone went to her rest.

An hour passed. Just as a Dutch clock in the hall was striking one, the storm burst on the Atlantic, and over the hills and downs of Tempest Island—burst in a blue blaze of lightning—a terrific downpour of rain. The last of the bonfires went out in the sputtering deluge. At the same moment a woman's cry of fear and agony arose in a cedar-paneled chamber of Tempest Hall, and rang like a tocsin through every nook and corner of the house—a blood-curdling cry that brought the servants out of their beds, and sent them flying, half-dressed, into the corridors.

"Help! help! oh, help!"

They rushed with one accord to their master's chamber.

In the centre of the room stood a figure, white as a sheeted corpse—Philip Hawkstone's Creole bride, uttering appalling screams. On the bed lay the lord of Tempest Island, he young, the rich, the handsome, who but a few hours before had brought that same fair bride to the ancient home of his race. The lamps, carried by the frightened servants flashed across his stark figure and ghastly, upturned face.

"He is dead!" shrieked Jetta Hawkstone. "Philip, my love, my love! He is dead!"

Verily, Philip Hawkstone had followed the custom of his ancestors, and come to his island home to meet his doom! There, in that ancient chamber, with the storm roaring madly outside, the bridegroom lay before his frantic bride, before the old servants of his house, a voiceless, motionless thing, with a knife driven to the hilt in his heart—stone-dead, murdered at midnight, in his own bed!

CHAPTER III.

GABRIEL RAVENEL.

Like wildfire the news spread across the island. Every man, woman and child of Philip Hawkstone's hundred tenants gathered in the hall, or outside it, under the pouring midnight sky. Some one ran to the island church and tolled the bell—its doleful voice rang out ominously through the storm. He was dead—murdered by the side of his bride—foully murdered in his sleep!

Salome, the Southern "mammy," ran to Jetta and caught her in a pair of strong, sheltering arms.

"Honey, honey! Fo' de Lord's sake, what dreffle thing is dis?" she cried. "Who's done gone and killed Marse Philip? Oh, dar's blood on yo' lily hands, honey—wipe it off—fo' de love o' Heaven, wipe it off," catching the delicate fingers that were, indeed, dabbled with a fearful stain, and rubbing them till the wedding-ring rolled away, and was lost under the feet of the servants.

"I woke—I found him lying like that!" gasped the unfortunate bride. "I put out my hands——"

Her voice failed her. She fell back, swooning, in Salome's arms.

They carried her to an adjoining chamber, and left her with Salome. Here a strange thing happened. The old negress was slapping her mistress's hands, and bathing her face, when an imperative rap sounded on a window near by. Salome cautiously drew back the curtain. Flattened against the glass, she saw the livid face of a girl, with a red rag of a cloak flung over her black hair.

"Let me in!" she called.

Salome drew back the fastening and raised the sash. Peg Patton sprang into the chamber.

"De door's fo' honest folks an' de window fo' rogues," bristled Salome. "What yo' want hyar, gal? An' what's dat red streak down yo' face? *Blood!*" The old woman recoiled a step. "Lord! we've had 'nuff o' dat in Tempest Hall to-night!"

Peg Patton, turbulent, disheveled, rubbed her hand across the stain.

"I climbed the porch," she said, hoarsely, "and the vines scratched me. I couldn't get through the crowd inside the house without being seen. Look here, you black nigger, skip into that closet there"—pointing savagely to a door—"and let me speak to Mrs. Hawkstone alone. She's coming to, I see, and I've something to tell her privately."

Her fierce eyes were all ablaze—she had a desperately tragic look.

"Yo' wildcat!" cried Salome, scornfully; "what yo' got to say to my missus?"

Peg answered by seizing the negress round the waist, hurling her headlong into the closet, and locking the door upon her.

This high-handed proceeding took Salome's breath for a moment, then she put her ear to the crack of the door and began to listen,

Mrs. Hawkstone had revived. She was rising up. Salome heard her cry out—heard Peg's voice also, hurried but cautious.

"I've come to tell you who killed your husband, Mrs. Hawkstone," she said. "Let me speak quick or I shall die."

An unintelligible murmur followed. Strain her ears as she would, Salome could not distinguish a word of it. Suddenly a scream broke from Mrs. Hawkstone.

"Oh, no, no! I cannot believe it. It cannot be!" she cried.

"You *must* believe it, madam! It's God's truth; but you're never to tell—whatever comes, you're never to tell while you live—you must swear that!"

"I swear it!" answered Jetta Hawkstone.

"Very well. You and I are partners in this secret. Help me and I will help you. I hated you a few hours ago, but that's over. You needn't stare, I'm not so bad when you come to know me. If we work together, we can throw these island idiots off the scent——"

The voice fell to a whisper. Salome heard no more, and soon profound silence reigned in the room.

"Honey," cried the old negress, pounding at last on the door; "let me out, honey!"

Jetta Hawkstone opened the closet. She was very pale, and shaking as if with palsy. No other person was now in the room. Peg Patton had gone, probably by the way that she came.

"Gracious Lord! honey," burst out Salome, "what dat limb o' ole Satan want with yo'? Where she git dat blood-streak on her cheek? In de porch-vines? Who's gwine to know dat? Mebbe she's had a han' in dis night's work."

Jetta Hawkstone snatched from a neighboring table a pocket Bible.

"Salome," she cried, in an awful voice, "go down on your knees and swear on this Book that you will never tell to living mortal how that girl came here to-night. If anybody should question you, swear that you will not answer. You will *kill* me if you answer, Salome! It must never be known that I have seen Peg Patton, or talked with her here, and you are the only person who can betray us."

Salome peered into the white face of her mistress, and found something there which made her hold her breath. Down she fell on her knees, and took the oath and kissed the Book.

"I'll never betray yo', honey—wild hosses sha'n't draw it fro' me!" she gasped. "I'll promise what yo' will—I'll do anything—say anything, to save yo', pore lamb! I'se ready to die fo' yo', chile—whatever yo' has done, I'se ready."

Mrs. Hawkstone comprehended something of what was passing in the negress's mind.

"Salome!" she cried, in slow horror, "do you dare to think that I killed my husband—*I?*"

"Honey, honey, God fo'give us all——"

But before she could say more, Jetta Hawkstone had gone down to the floor in another swoon, more deathlike than the other, and out of which she did not emerge till morning light.

Meanwhile, confusion filled the house. Harris, the overseer of the island, had assumed control of the situation.

"Mr. Hawkstone has been murdered," he said, addressing the crowd that choked the main hall. "We have no time to waste here. Divide yourselves into squads and search every inch of the island. The murderer cannot be far away. That he is a stranger goes without saying, for you all know no islander has killed Philip Hawkstone. It's reasonable to suppose that the scoundrel will be anxious to get off at the first chance. So, fetch your lanterns, every one of you. Set sentinels at the landing-places, and you, Sampson"—turning to a grizzled man in a pea-jacket and nor'wester—"must go over to the mainland for help. You are the best sailor among us storm or no storm, you must go. I will guard the house. If a strange person is found anywhere on the island, bring him to me—on your lives, don't let him escape."

They separated to do Harris's bidding. Joe Derby alone remained behind, and, with the overseer, searched the house and grounds. There had been no struggle, neither robbery, for Philip Hawkstone's watch, set with diamonds, and his well-filled purse, still lay on the table beside his bed. A window stood open near by to admit the air. Outside was the roof of the porch. By this way, probably, the assassin had come and gone, leaving no trace.

Derby mentioned to the overseer the search which he had made once before that night at Hawkstone's biddings, and his ill-success.

"Heaven above, man!" cried Harris; "that was the murderer, you may be sure, prowling about the premises, even then! What was he like?"

"Hanged if I know!" answered Derby, in an aggrieved tone. "I didn't see so much as the print of his foot. But Mr. Hawkstone seemed a good deal upset about it."

"You have a clew—you must follow it up," said Harris.

"That's easier said than done," grumbled Derby.

However, he also took a lantern, and went out to join in the search.

Down the island road he stalked, till he came to the church, which stood in a green hollow facing the sea. On one side was the graveyard, where slept the Hawkstones of many generations, with their servants gathered around them. As Derby reached the gate he saw that it stood wide open. Cautiously he entered, peering into the darkness for some movement of life among the dead. On his right was the family tomb of the Hawkstones; on his left, in the shadow of the church-wall, stood a slab, raised on four stone legs, and inscribed with the name and virtues of some retainer of the house. As Derby drew near, he discovered something perched on this slab—an object blacker than the surrounding gloom—living, too, for it moved as he approached.

"Who's there?" he called.

No voice answered. He swung his light aloft, and saw a girl, in a red cloak, sitting there in the storm and darkness, and looking down upon him with wicked, shining eyes.

"Peg Patton, you minx!" cried Derby; "what are you doing here at this hour of night?"

"I'll answer your question by answering another," she answered, dryly. "Joe Derby, you fool! what are you hunting after in Tempest Island graveyard at two o'clock in the morning?"

"The party that killed Mr. Hawkstone," bristled Joe. "Wish I had my fingers round his windpipe! Lord love us! You look uncommonly queer sitting up there, girl! You ought to be on your knees, praying. S'pose you haven't forgot how young master used to be sweet on *you?*"

She gave a weird laugh. Her savage face gleamed ashy pale through her disheveled hair.

"Forgot? Oh, no!" she answered. "He was my lover once; he'll never be lover to anybody again, it seems. Thank God he's dead! I'd rather he'd be dead than to belong to another woman. I'm looking myself for the person that killed him; it's great fun, too—ha! ha!"

Like most of the island folks, Joe was compassionately inclined toward this girl, whom Philip Hawkstone, for mere selfish pleasure, had made to suffer such grievous heartache.

"Look here, Peg," he said, kindly, "Mr. Hawkstone's sudden end hasn't turned your head, I hope? Come down from that slab, and I'll go home with you. It's a black road to the Inlet at this hour, and nobody knows what devils may be abroad on the island to-night."

"Do you think I'm afraid of anything, dead or alive, on the Tempest?" sneered Peg Patton. "Do you think I can't defend myself against whatever walks here? Feel my fists, Joe Derby, and then say whether they were made for use or not."

She leaped at him like a panther. A stunning blow, which would have done credit to any male islander, toppled him over, strong man that he was, among the graves. His head struck a sunken memorial stone, and he lost consciousness.

A cold drip of rain on his upturned face revived him at last. Chagrined and discomfited, Joe scrambled to his feet, and picked up his lantern from the grass. Peg was gone. He was alone in the churchyard, dazed and chilled. He looked around.

"Blast the girl!" muttered Derby. "She has the strength of a man and the temper of Beelzebub! It's safe to risk her anywhere." And he turned and started for the shore.

Here he expected to meet some of the other islanders sent out by the overseer. As Derby was approaching the wharf he brought up suddenly, violently against a man, who seemed to be running along the beach, or racing it with tremendous strides.

"Halt!" cried Joe. "Who are you?"

"That's no affair of yours!" was the sharp answer.

Derby grasped him by the shoulder.

"Hands off, you boor!" said the other, fiercely; but Derby held him fast—looked at him keenly by the light of his lantern.

He was a young man, dark-haired, elegant rather than muscular, with a face as livid as chalk. His hat was off, his garments dripped with rain, and he seemed laboring under intense excitement.

"You are no islander, I can swear," said Joe Derby. "Come, give an account of yourself, and the clearer it is, why, the better for you, sir!"

Derby felt his prisoner tremble in his hold, either with wrath or some other emotion. He had not the physical power to break from the islander, so he answered, shortly:

"You must be 'clean daft,' as the Scotch say. I've no account to give of myself, blockhead! Thank Heaven! I *am* a stranger on this island; never saw the cursed place before to-night, and never want to see it again! My boat has gone adrift in the storm. If you can tell me where to find another, I'll be infinitely obliged to you."

"What's your name?" demanded Derby.

"Gabriel Ravenel!"

"Well, I fancy you won't want a boat again to-night, sir. You admit you're a stranger on the Tempest. Now strangers don't come to this island without a purpose. *What was yours?*"

"You impertinent lunatic!" cried Gabriel Ravenel. "Take your hands off me or I'll pitch you into the sea!" But being the weaker vessel, his threat was an idle one, and Derby still held him fast.

"Mr. Ravenel," said the islander, "you're a curious sort of person to run against in this place, and at this particular time! By the appearance of your clothes, you've been rummaging about a good while—not a dry thread left in 'em, *I* should say! Now, sir, up at Tempest Hall there's been a foul murder to-night. We're looking

for the party that did it. I fancy we've got him !"—gripping his prey significantly. "Just come along with me !"

Ravenel gave a convulsive start.

"A murder at Tempest Hall ?" he gasped. "What do you mean, man ? Not—not——"

"Exactly," said Joe ; "Mr. Philip Hawkstone has been stabbed in his bed."

"Heaven above !" cried Ravenel ; "and ten minutes ago I was cursing him with heart and voice !"

"Ha ! you knew the master, then ? You wasn't a stranger to *him*, if you are to the island ? Come along, I say ! Here's a party ahead that'll take you by force, if t'other way won't do."

A detachment of searchers appeared in the curve of the beach. Ravenel was instantly surrounded. He offered no resistance, no protest.

"My friends," he said, calmly, "I see, at last, the method in your madness. You imagine me to be the murderer of Philip Hawkstone. 'Pon my soul, this is even more unique than losing my boat ! I'm delighted to go with you—you need use no compulsion—I am as eager to see the end of the matter as you can desire me to be. Proceed, idiots !"

They conducted him to Tempest Hall. This wild-eyed stranger, hatless, disheveled, found wandering about the island "in the dead waste and middle of the night," immediately became an object of the blackest suspicion to Hawkstone's islanders. Harris questioned him sharply. What was he doing on the island ?

"Private business alone brought me here," Ravenel answered, haughtily ; "I decline to speak of it."

He then asked to see Mrs. Hawkstone.

"Do you know the lady ?" demanded Harris.

"Intimately."

"She is indisposed—she can see no one at present."

"Will you kindly inform her that I am here, and that she has my profound sympathy in her trouble ?" said Ravenel, with perfect coolness, and after that he would talk no more.

He was promptly locked into the strongest room of the

house to await the arrival of the officers of the law from the mainland.

With the capture of Ravenel, the main events of the night ended. The searching parties came straggling back, empty-handed, to the hall. No other suspicious person had anywhere been seen or heard of. By daybreak the islanders were united in the belief that either the fellow Ravenel was the murderer, or — terrible thought!—some party, yet unknown, in the precincts of the hall itself.

Jetta Hawkstone, the widowed bride, remained shut in her own room, with only Salome to attend her. She knew little of what was passing in the house till that dreadful ordeal—the coroner's inquest—came. To this, every member of the household of Tempest Hall was duly summoned.

The inquest was held in the ancient library. The coroner took his seat at the head of the long table, the jury ranged themselves around it. The servants were first sworn. Not one of them could tell anything that the reader does not already know. The testimony of the entire lot was about the same—they had been awakened by Mrs. Hawkstone's frantic screams, and rushed into their master's room to find him dead, and his young bride standing over him, distracted with terror and grief. They were asked if they had seen the blood on her hands. Yes, and all had heard the explanation given to the black woman Salome.

Salome herself testified that Philip Hawkstone had been a week married to her young mistress when the two arrived at Tempest Island that she had journeyed with them from the home of the latter in a Southern State—that the love of the young pair for each other was boundless, and their happiness beyond question. She, Salome, had been born the slave of a wealthy planter named Ravenel, and given by him to his ward, the present Mrs. Hawkstone. At the name of Ravenel the officers exchanged glances.

"Bring in the prisoner," said the coroner.

Gabriel Ravenel entered. He had assumed his normal

appearance, and looked what he really was—a handsome, high-bred young gentleman. At sight of him Salome uttered an involuntary scream.

"Marse Gabriel! Marse Gabriel!"

"You recognize this man?" said the coroner.

"Yes," Salome acknowledged. He was the son of her late master, and a former lover of Mrs. Hawkstone's.

This testimony made a sensation in the room.

Ravenel was next examined.

He admitted the truth of Salome's statements, also that he had followed the wedded pair North, and to Tempest Island. For what purpose? Here he grew pale and confused, and answered that he had wished to see with his own eyes that Mrs. Hawkstone was happy with the man she had chosen in preference to himself. Had his relations with Hawkstone been cordial? As college classmates, yes; as rivals, no. He had once challenged the island lord to a duel, but the latter would not fight. The knife which had done the fatal deed was shown. Ravenel swore that he had never seen it before. Had he been at the hall on the night of the murder? Yes, he had entered the grounds while the rejoicing was in progress—had seen Hawkstone and his bride in the porch, and on returning to the shore, and finding his boat adrift, had walked distractedly about in the rain till surprised by Joe Derby. He answered all questions with frankness and composure. A disappointed lover he certainly was, torn with jealous passions, and guilty of having for more than a week dogged the steps of the bridal pair. Was he a midnight assassin also? It remained to be seen whether or not such a charge could be properly supported against Gabriel Ravenel.

Jetta Hawkstone was next to appear. She entered the room dressed in deepest black. Her beautiful eyes were hollow, her face looked white and drawn. She started slightly as her gaze fell on Ravenel, but that was all. Perhaps the shock of her husband's death had rendered her incapable of lighter shades of feeling. She gave her testimony with calmness.

On the night of the murder she had been awakened by

a strange sound at the open window of her chamber. She had called her husband in vain—had leaned and touched him had felt something warm and wet on her hands ; then, lighting a lamp, she had made the ghastly discovery of the murder. She was asked if she knew of any person who could have committed such a crime. She grew a shade whiter and faltered "No !" Did she recognize the man Ravenel ? Yes, and for the first time the color surged into her stony face. He was a rejected suitor ? Yes. Had he ever, in her presence, uttered threats against the dead man ? She firmly answered "No." This was all that Philip Hawkstone's widow had to tell.

Other testimony of less importance followed. A verdict of willful murder was promptly rendered against Gabriel Ravenel. The officers of the law took possession of the unlucky lover, and carried him straightway to Whithaven Jail, to await trial for the assassination of Philip Hawkstone.

The island people were gathered about the house anxiously awaiting the verdict. As the witnesses came out from the inquest a girl in a red cloak darted from the shadow of the main staircase, raised Mrs. Hawkstone's hands to her lips, kissed it passionately, and whispered over it one word "To-night." Then Peg Patton drew back, and was lost at once in the crowd.

CHAPTER IV.

GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY.

Darkness and silence fell together on Tempest Hall. The island folks dispersed to their own homes. In the gloom of twilight Salome and her mistress, both muffled to the eyes, stole unseen out of a side door, and crept away, like guilty creatures, to the beach.

The night was warm and still. A sickle moon shone in the west. These two women entered a lonely path leading down to the cliffs. Neither spoke. Mrs. Hawkstone was in advance. She was closely vailed, and she trem-

oled as she walked. At the end of a tiresome mile she paused and said to Salome:

"Wait here for me—I am going on alone."

"Yo' can't find de way," protested Salome. "Honey, does yo' know what dese island folks say? How yo' war de las' pussun dat saw Marse Philip alive—how yo' war found with red hands by his body——"

"Hush! hush! I know, Salome—it cannot matter what they say—here comes that girl, at last."

Peg Patton appeared suddenly round the base of the cliffs, stalking, like a grenadier, through the salt pools and over the wet *débris* of the shore. She approached Mrs. Hawkstone with an air of suppressed excitement.

"What's to be done, madam, about the man that lies in Whithaven Jail to-night?" she asked.

Jetta Hawkstone looked her full in her wild, dark face, and answered, laconically, "Nothing!"

"Very well," said Peg, in a dry voice, "I'll wager they won't hang him without a fair trial. Now leave the nigger here, Mrs. Hawkstone, and follow me. I hope there are no spies about."

Salome was commanded to remain in the shelter of the cliffs, and her mistress went away with Peg Patton—whither, the black woman knew not. At the end of an hour Mrs. Hawkstone came back alone, looking white and shaken.

"Give me your arm, Salome," she said, feebly, "and lead me home—I am ill."

"Gracious Lord! whar yo' been, honey?"

"Don't ask me—I cannot tell you."

Salome led her home. Once indoors, Jetta Hawkstone crept to the nursery where little Basil slept, and cast herself down by the child's bed, with her fair face in the dust. There she lay, prone and motionless, till morning light.

For a time great excitement prevailed, both on the island and the mainland, over Philip Hawkstone's murder. Opinions were divided concerning the guilt of Ravenel. Cruel tongues hinted that the Creole bride might know more about the matter than she chose to admit—that

the handsome lover—a Creole also—might be but an accomplice.

Jetta Hawkstone heard and made no sign. She remained at Tempest Hall, shut up with little Basil, and devoting herself to the child with a mother's zeal and affection. She refuted no charges, sought no sympathy or pity. This girl, far from home and kindred, among those who disliked and suspected her, secretly accused of the death of the man she loved, wore, in these dark days, a mask of marble. Her little stepson was her sole solace—the only thing that loved her at Tempest Island.

Time went on. No new developments appeared in the case. The evidence necessary to convict Ravenel was lacking. Further proof of his complicity in, or knowledge of, the murder could not be obtained. So the door of the jail opened, at last, and the young fellow was discharged from custody—not with innocence established, but rather with guilt not proven. Before shaking the dust of Yankeeland from his feet, Gabriel Ravenel went down to Tempest Island for a last interview with Philip Hawkstone's widow.

It was a cheerless day, with rain falling and a thick mist on the sea. He found Jetta Hawkstone sitting in the old drawing-room with the child Basil playing by her side. Her dress, of blackest crape and bombazine, made her pallor startling. He scarcely recognized her. She was like something

> —"not yet dead,
> But in old marble ever beautiful."

Awed and amazed, he stood in her presence, unable to articulate a word.

"Harris told me that you had been released," she said, listlessly extending her ivory hand.

"I return South at once," he stammered; "but I could not go without seeing you once more, Jetta."

Her big, dusky eyes shone in her face without seeming to light its white, impassive lines. She waited for him to speak again.

"They found it impossible to prove me a murderer," he went on, in an aggrieved tone, "so they were forced,

willing or unwilling, to release me. Of course in this place I shall always be spoken of as Philip Hawkstone's assassin. Without doubt, the stigma of the affair will stick to me for ever. Neither have *you* escaped, it seems. These island idiots, and their fellows on the mainland, call us both hard names. We shall be suspected persons "— with a short laugh —" till the end of our days."

Her face kept its pale apathy.

"Gabriel Ravenel, why did you come here at all?" she demanded.

The color flew into his handsome face.

"I was mad with jealous despair, and the misery of your loss, Jetta! You were my father's ward; I had lived under the same roof with you for years, I loved you more than life, and this Philip Hawkstone, my so-called friend, came and won you from me, almost in a day. I was wild to catch one more glimpse of you – to see with my own eyes that he had brought you to a home where you would be happy. It seems that I have been well punished for my stupendous folly."

The child was leaning his dimpled elbow on her knee. She kissed him, then rang for a nurse maid, and sent him away.

"I could not talk in that boy's presence," she muttered, as the door closed after him. "Gabriel, you have, indeed, been sorely punished. Say that you forgive me," remorsefully, "for all that I have made you suffer."

He thought she was alluding to his unrequited love, and he gathered heart to speak of the real object of his visit.

"Great Heaven! Jetta, you are changed beyond belief. I scarcely know you—small wonder, too. The air of this abominable island is of itself enough to kill you—you—a Southern flower. Look!" with a motion of his hand toward the window, all blurred with sea-mist.

There lay the bleak shore, against which the waves were breaking in long streaks of gray foam—a barren shore, without bloom or color to-day, yet full of wild beauty.

"I wonder that you could remain here so long," grumbled Ravernel. "But your disastrous marriage is now ended, Jetta. Return to your old home—to your old friends, and in their love forget this Northern nightmare! I am here to-day, as, no doubt you have already guessed, to take you back to my father's house. You know that you will be received there with open arms; and surely this island is no place for you now, Jetta."

Her white face was as unreadable as the Egyptian Sphinx.

"You do not know what you say, Gabriel. On this island I shall live and die. To Philip Hawkstone's son's service I have dedicated myself, body and soul. Henceforth I live for him, and him only. My Southern home, my friends, all that I left behind me on my marriage day, are now as the things of a dream. In time I shall overcome the prejudice of these islanders, but whether I do or not, here I stay! This spot, pleasant or unpleasant, hospitable or otherwise, is all the home that remains to me. Poor, poor Gabriel! I pity you infinitely, but I am glad that you are going back, and at once. There is a great gulf fixed between us now—this you ought to know as well as I do—and I find your presence *terrible!*"

He staggered back a step, changing rapid color.

"I see, Jetta—you have been dissembling"—and his voice grew sulky—"you do not, after all, believe me to be innocent of your husband's death?"

She arose from her chair and came toward him, her long, black dress sweeping the floor, her face like ashes.

"Gabriel Ravenel," she answered, scarcely above a whisper, "I know who killed my husband! Consider what I say—I do not suspect—I know! Oh, God! I wish I did not—I wish I did not!" wringing her hands wildly.

He drew back from her, cowering with sudden fear.

"Jetta! Why do you look at me like this? I—I—am afraid of you! Who killed Philip Hawkstone?"

She gazed straight into his eyes.

"You may well be afraid *of one* holding such a secret.

Gabriel! Who killed the man I loved?—the man I shall always love while life lasts? When I die, I will tell, but not till then. I promise you I swear to you, Gabriel Ravenel—*not till then!* Do you understand me?"

He stared at her, but answered not a word. She pointed through the mist-wet window.

"Out there, in the family tomb of the Hawkstones," she said, "my heart lies buried. Think of me, shut in this old house looking out on his grave from year's end to year's end—think of me, bearing henceforth the awful secret of his death, yet with lips sealed for ever on the name of his destroyer, and then, Gabriel Ravenel, imagine, if you can, all that I am doomed to suffer!"

He stumbled hurriedly toward the door, with his hair rising on his head.

"Jetta, I believe from my soul, that you killed him yourself!" he cried.

She gave him a mournful glance.

"This from *you*, Gabriel?"

"Forgive me I did not mean it!" he muttered, hoarsely; "shall I go?"

"Yes!" she answered: "go, and never, never come here again!"

And he went, through the storm and sea-mist, and Tempest Island knew Gabriel Ravenel no more.

CHAPTER V.

THE ISLAND LADY.

Months and years glided on. Philip Hawkstone's murder faded gradually from the minds of men. His widow remained on the island, and governed the people like a queen. The islanders began by distrusting and disliking her; they ended by giving her unqualified love and respect. Did sorrow, sickness or poverty enter their homes, the island lady, as she was called, was swift to follow after, with a heart full of sympathy and a hand freighted with relief. She ruled them with kindness and gentleness. Patiently, persistently, she won her way into their confidence and esteem. Harris, the overseer, who

had, at the time of Philip Hawkstone's death, regarded the fair Creole with open suspicion, soon became her firm friend, her faithful, zealous adherent. She superintended all the work done on the island ; built houses, introduced new inventions, and cultivated the acquaintance of every man, woman and child among her tenants ; but she saw no strangers, received no visitors, and rarely crossed to the mainland. A pale, impressive lady, always gentle, but never joyous, dressed invariably in black, and with streaks of premature gray in her lovely hair—a lady whose manner compelled deference and attention, and who moved among her dependents with the grace of a born sovereign ; yet all the while Jetta Hawkstone carried in her heart a silent sorrow, like the fox which gnawed the vitals of the Spartan lad in olden story.

"She has made a conquest of every soul on the island," Harris was wont to sigh ; "she is rich and powerful and —the most unhappy creature in the world !"

To that wild, strong-fisted gypsy, Peg Patton, Philip Hawkstone's widow was particularly kind. The girl lived with a blind grandmother in a tumble-down old house at the head of a lonesome, wooded inlet. Immediately after the tragedy, Mrs. Hawkstone sent workmen to repair the house, and it soon became known that she had taken the inmates under her own care, and was supporting them in every comfort. The girl Peg came often to the hall, and held long interviews with the island lady, to which no third party was ever admitted. The islanders discovered that Mrs. Hawkstone went sometimes unattended to the lonely Inlet house, and they saw that all animosity was over betwixt Hawkstone's jilted sweetheart and the fair woman he had married. Indeed, if there was one person above all others who, from first hating Jetta Hawkstone, had now come to r gard her with devoted affection, that person was Peg Patton.

To little Basil, the heir of the island, Jetta Hawkstone was mother, father, comrade, friend and teacher, all in one. Heart and soul, this woman, young and beautiful, devoted herself to the boy, and in return Basil adored

his fair stepmother. A dashing, brilliant fellow he was, yellow-haired and symmetrical as a young Greek, hot-hearted, high-tempered too, with mighty ideas of his own importance, and so haughty withal that he was early called "Prince Lucifer" by his envious cousin Vincent, who represented a younger branch of the family.

"My darling," said Jetta Hawkstone to her son, "you are the owner of this island, you are rich, you bear an old and honorable name, you hold great possibilities for good or evil in your hands; learn first to control yourself, and then you can be trusted to rule others. You were born a gentleman act like one everywhere, and under all circumstances."

The best tutors that money could procure came to the island to teach the lad, for she would not be parted from him. She became the guardian of his education as well as of his lordly little person. The boy never spoke of his father, and seemed not to remember him.

Time went on. The day of tutors passed. Basil Hawkstone entered college. The young island sovereign went out from his small domain to conquer new worlds.

"Trust me, mamma," he said, "I will remember that I am a Hawkstone. I will win all the honors I can, for your sake."

And he kept his word. He was the most brilliant scholar of his class, and during his college course was the same domineering, all-conquering "Prince Lucifer" that he had been on his little island. He graduated in a blaze of glory, and a few weeks later sailed for Europe, to see the world and enjoy life for a season, after the fashion of his kind.

In the drawing-room at Tempest Hall mother and son parted. Jetta Hawkstone had aged greatly of late. Her abundant hair was now as white as snow.

"You will not remain long abroad, Basil?" she said, wistfully, to the splendid, stalwart fellow who was gazing at her so fondly from a pair of iron-gray eyes, set under level black brows. He was all strength and grace and beauty, far handsomer than Philip Hawk-

stone had ever been, and with none of the melancholy Charles-Stuart look of his father.

"I shall be gone but a year, mamma," he answered; "twelve short months."

"Basil, have I been a good mother to you?" she asked, with her hands on his broad shoulders.

"The best in the world!" he answered.

"My beautiful boy! some day you will bring a wife to Tempest Hall to take my place. Basil, oh, Basil!"—and a convulsive shudder shook her from head to foot—"God grant that the family doom may not overtake *you!* A presentiment of evil is upon me to-day. Choose carefully, choose wisely, Basil! You, a Hawkstone, ought to marry the noblest in the land."

"I promise to stoop to nothing less than a princess, mother," he laughed, gayly. "I trust it will be many a day before anybody takes your place—in fact, no living woman *can* take your place on the Tempest. Be not alarmed; I know nothing of love, care nothing for it," tossing back his brown locks. "I am too much of a despot by nature to submit to its control. I shall return to you even as I go—unscathed, heart-whole," and then he added, with bold arrogance: "There are few women in the world fit to be the wife of a Hawkstone."

"The doom of the family is unhappy marriage. Do you know that, Basil?"

"I have heard some rubbish of the sort"—loftily—"but superstition in these days is vulgar—quite unworthy of us, you know! You may be sure that the family doom, as you call it, will never overtake *me.*"

So he went, in his splendid, boastful strength, and Jetta Hawkstone was left alone at Tempest Island.

A year passed, but Basil did not return. He had attained his majority now, and was his own master, accountable neither to his stepmother nor any other.

His letters were frequent and tender, but evasive. He made no apologies nor explanations, and frankly declared that she need not look for him for another twelvemonth at least. He seemed fascinated with European life, and he was spending money with a lavish hand.

The second year went by like the first, but Basil Hawkstone did not come. His mother waited anxiously. With the unerring instinct of love she felt that something was wrong.

"What the deuce can Prince Lucifer be doing over there in London and Paris?" sneered young Vincent Hawkstone, who had come down to the island to spend a vacation. The boy was poor and kinless save for Basil. He hated this elder and more fortunate Hawkstone with his whole heart, and did not scruple to express these sentiments when occasion offered. "You may be sure he's up to mischief, my dear aunt. Basil is sly, deuced sly, for all you think him such a paragon. I hope to goodness he'll have the decency to send *me* abroad when I am done with school. We two are the last of the Hawkstones. He is rich, I am a beggar. He ought, in common justice, to divide the family shekels with me."

She looked at him in cold anger.

"Vincent, I forbid you ever again, in my presence, to speak like that of your cousin! Your insinuations are unworthy, unjust. He can do no wrong—I trust him implicity. Ungrateful boy! you forget that you already owe him everything. Your father was a prodigal, who spent his substance in riotous living. He left you friendless and penniless. For years Basil has provided for you liberally. You are living now upon his bounty. Vincent, I fear a day will come when you, like the serpent warmed in a generous bosom, will repay your cousin with some deadly sting."

"I hate Basil!" answered Vincent, with boyish bluntness. "I hate his high and mighty airs; I will sting him if I ever get the chance, see if I don't!"

One fateful day a letter came to Jetta Hawkstone from the far South. The signature at the bottom of the sheet was Gabriel Ravenel. She read it with blanching lips, then started up from the dinner-table where she was sitting with the boy Vincent, and rang for a servant to fetch Harris the overseer. The latter came, an old man now, beginning to stoop with the weight of years.

"I am called away in haste, Harris," said the lady of

the island. "Take care of everything here, Vincent included, till I return."

"Yes, madam," said Harris.

"I cannot tell how long I may be absent, so you must keep the island, and especially the Hall, ready for my son's arrival. He may come at any time, and without warning."

"I will see that he is welcomed properly, madam," replied Harris.

Her trunks were packed in haste, and attended by a single maid—Salome had died years before—she departed from Tempest Island.

She was absent a month. No member of the household knew whither she had gone, or what the errand was which had called her away. She came back one day in the late Winter. Vincent Hawkstone, who had given old Harris no end of trouble in the island lady's absence, went down to the wharf to meet her. As she stepped ashore from the yacht which had brought her from Whithaven, the boy noticed that her movements were feeble and slow. She had a wan, wasted look. It seemed as though a dozen years had passed over her since her departure. She was not alone. By her side walked a young girl in a mourning frock—the handsomest creature that Vincent had ever seen.

"Who the deuce can that be?" thought the boy, as he sprang to meet his aunt.

"Has Basil – has my son arrived?" was her first question, made in an anxious and enfeebled voice.

"No," replied Vincent; "we have heard nothing from him since you went away. Basil—you think of no one but Basil! Of course he's not coming. By Jove! if I had his money, I wouldn't quit Paris and Rome for such a place as Tempest Island, though life here seems likely to be more tolerable *now!*"—casting a bold look at the girl, who was surveying him with a pair of scornful eyes, like blackest velvet.

"Vincent," explained Mrs Hawkstone, quietly, "this child is the daughter of my old friend, Gabriel Ravenel. She was named for me—she now belongs to me, for her

father has recently died, and I have adopted her. I went South a month ago to take charge of Jetta. Harris, give me your arm—I am growing old."

"Old, madam!" said Harris, "and you still on the right side of forty? No, no, that can't be. You are tired with your journey—that's all."

She leaned heavily on his arm as they went up to the house. Vincent and the girl, Jetta Ravenel, daughter of that man who had once lain in Whithaven Jail accused of the murder of Philip Hawkstone, followed after.

"So you've come to live on the island?" said Vincent Hawkstone. "You are Southern, like my aunt, I suppose?"

She had a neck as white as ivory, and down her shapely back streamed two massive braids of black hair with curling auburn tips. She turned that same neck in a stately way, and answered:

"I hope *you* do not belong here!"

He laughed.

"Only by sufferance! I am a poor relation merely—a hanger-on of the family. You will find Prince Lucifer more agreeable—everybody adores him and snubs me. You seem to be a high and mighty miss. I wonder what my aunt means to do with you? Whatever possessed her to bring a girl to Tempest Hall? It's no place for girls. We've had every other horror here in the last twenty years, but no girls. Why, you'll be like something out of a menagerie."

She gave him a withering look.

"You are the most impertinent person that I ever saw," she said, and then walked on in contemptuous silence.

When they reached the porch Mrs. Hawkstone turned and called the girl, softly, tenderly.

"Welcome to your new home, Jetta! I want you to be very happy here, dear child—happier than I have ever been. Welcome, Gabriel's daughter!"

She led the young stranger across the threshold with her own hand, then she turned to say something to Harris, and fell to the floor in a dead faint.

They carried her into the drawing-room. She revived shortly, and looked around for Jetta.

"Do not be frightened," she said; "it is nothing—nothing but fatigue"—smiling into the girl's scared face—"I shall be better to-morrow."

The overseer dined with her that day.

"My good Harris," she said, "I hope my islanders will not look unkindly on Gabriel Ravenel's daughter. She is an orphan, penniless, and alone in the world. Already I love her next to Basil."

"Madam," answered Harris, "your islanders will never show unkindness to any one that you love. They have full confidence in your wisdom, and many of them no longer remember even the name of Gabriel Ravenel."

She nodded.

"Yes—yes, they seem to have forgotten all the evil of the past—they love me now—they *believe* in me. I have plans for this young girl, Harris, which I need not tell you now. To-morrow you must go to Whithaven and bring me a lawyer and a physician—I have need, I think, of both."

That night the island lady wrote to her son, urging him to return at once, as matters of importance demanded his immediate presence. Of the girl Jetta she made no mention.

She arose from the table at which she had been writing and walked to the window of the library—that ancient window written over with the names of Rochambeau's officers—and looked out on the night. A full moon rode in the sky, and shone down on the great sea, and the hills and downs of the island. The naked vines of the porch sparkled frostily in the white light. Peace and silence reigned. Did the Hawkstone doom still brood above this spot? Would the fate of this other Jetta, Gabriel's daughter, named in remembrance of his first unfortunate love, be happier than her own?

"God grant it!" she shuddered.

For years this woman had battled ineffectually with a great silent sorrow. Now she was entering upon another contest as hopeless as the first. Disease, merciless, in-

curable, was her antagonist, and the end could not be far away. Above-stairs, Jetta the girl lay sleeping her first sleep on Tempest Island. Below, Jetta the woman stood for a long time with the moonlight falling on her black dress and prematurely bleached hair, her joyless eyes turned outward on those miles of island territory where she had lived and suffered for twenty years. Then she went back to the table, took up her pen again, and firmly added these concluding lines to her letter:

"My days are numbered, Basil—come quickly! I have had a sad life, but it is almost done, and there is something of great importance which I must communicate to you before I go."

Chapter VI.

A DEATH-BED.

Two months later he came. It was an afternoon in Spring, and in the same Cedar Chamber where Philip Hawkstone had met death long years before his widow now lay dying.

The massive oak furniture, carved with the arms of the Hawkstones, had been brought from England in the preceding century. The polished floor was overspread with Eastern rugs. A nurse and a physician stood by the huge four-poster whereon Mrs. Hawkstone lay, like a piece of fragile porcelain. Gabriel Ravenel's daughter crouched by the side of the bed, holding the hand of her friend and wetting it with her tears.

"Basil—where is Basil?" murmured the sick woman; "will he never come?"

"Basil has not yet arrived," answered the doctor, soothingly. "But your nephew Vincent is below in the drawing-room—will you see *him*?"

"No, no; not Vincent—I want only Basil," she said, in a feeble, wandering voice; "did you not tell me that he had sailed from Liverpool?"

"Yes, madam; and the steamer arrived safely yesterday. I telegraphed to him that you could not last till midnight. Courage! he will soon be with you. Samp-

son went over to Whithaven to meet the New York express an hour ago."

She moved uneasily on her pillow.

"Strange that he delays so long! It is quite unlike Basil. If he does not make he haste will find me gone. Look out again, Jetta — is there any boat in sight?" The girl flew to the window. The sun was just setting over the tumbled hills and gray downs of the island and glinting the tawny wings of the windmills. Peacocks screamed along the old seawall at the foot of the grounds and out beyond it. Jetta's eyes, searching the berylline sea-track, espied a sail making swiftly for the wharf.

"It is Sampson's catboat," she cried, "and there are two men in it. Yes, he is coming, Mrs. Hawkstone—he is coming, at last!"

"Thank God!" murmured the sick woman, falling back in the arms of her nurse.

Jetta Ravenel remained at the window, a lithe, girlish shape, full of leopard-like grace, and saw the catboat approach the landing and its two occupants leap ashore. One proceeded to secure the little craft, the other hurried up the green slope to the Hall.

He carried himself with a grand air. The title of Prince Lucifer seemed not altogether inappropriate to this lordly American. Jetta Ravenel watched him in strange fascination. It was her first glimpse of the man who was fated to work such havoc in her own young life.

He gained the porch. Before he could touch the brass knocker some watcher from within had admitted him. With tremendous strides he ascended the stair. The door of the Cedar Chamber flew back and Basil Hawkstone stood again in the presence of his stepmother.

He staggered to the bed and fell on his knees beside it. Mrs. Hawkstone made a gesture to the nurse and the physician.

"Leave us together," she said.

They vanished.

"You must go also, Jetta."

The girl cast one look at Basil Hawkstone prostrate in

his splendid strength, and darted out in the wake of the others. The widow and son of Philip Hawkstone were thus left alone in the Cedar Chamber.

"Basil!"

"Mother?"

"Oh, my darling, you went away for one year and you have remained three!"

He shuddered.

"Yes. I was detained by many things. Oh, don't reproach me, mother—I never dreamed that you were so ill."

She turned his handsome face to the light.

"How worn and haggard you look, Basil! how changed! You have grown old and—and—unfamiliar."

He winced.

"Old?—changed? Well, that is not strange, mother. After all, three years is a long while, and of late I have been anxious and unhappy about you."

She saw that he was evading her.

"You are keeping something from me, Basil!" she cried. "But wait! I must speak first"—catching her breath painfully. "Do you not see that I must make haste?—I have so little time. In the last few months—yes, ever since I knew that I was stricken with a mortal disease—I have thought only of you, planned only for you. In the corner yonder stands a cabinet." He looked and nodded. "It holds my private papers. Here is the key," forcing the same into his hand. "The topmost document is for you to read as soon as I die—let no eye but your own see it—it was written for you only, and from it you will learn something of what I have suffered since I came to this island."

The light began to die in the chamber; it seemed as though the voice of the island lady failed with it.

"Lift me a little, Basil," she said; "there is such a sense of suffocation here," pressing her hand to her breast.

She looked him straight in the eyes.

"Do you remember your father?"

"Imperfectly."

"You know how he died?"

"Yes."

"It was in this very room—you and I have never talked of the matter before. I wanted to die here, also. You have heard of Gabriel Ravenel?"

"He was the man suspected of my father's murder."

"Yes. He was likewise my lover in the days before I met Philip Hawkstone. You have heard the story of his arrest—of how he lay in Whithaven Jail for weeks, accused of a foul crime, and I did not—I could not open my lips to declare his innocence, though I knew it only too well, and though he was the son of a guardian to whom I owed everything in the past."

"Mother!"

"You may well look at me in horror. After Gabriel was released he returned to the South. There he made a loveless marriage, and was soon left a widower with an infant son. Then came the war. He took the field with the forces of his native State—he sought and won 'the bubble reputation at the cannon's mouth,' and, when the struggle was over, sank quickly, like many others, into obscurity—a crippled, ruined, impoverished man. A few months ago he sent me a letter which wrung my heart. It was the first news that I had heard of him for many years. He was dying in poverty and wretchedness, attended only by his little daughter Jetta, the fruit of a second marriage, which seems to have been as unhappy as the first. To my care he committed the child. I started South immediately—I found his grave—I also found Jetta and brought her back with me, determined to make restitution to the father through the daughter—to atone for the wrong I had done him, for the misery and shame that he had suffered because of me—by rearing his child as my own, and lavishing upon her every good gift that a mother can bestow. Oh, Basil, she is so young, so friendless, and I must go and leave her when she needs me most—go, with the debt I owe Gabriel unpaid, with my work of reparation scarcely begun. Basil, Basil, I must leave it all to you—I must leave Jetta herself to you."

A look of relief crossed his handsome, anxious face.

"Is that all?" he answered. "I accept the child as a sacred trust."

"No, that is not all," she gasped. "By birth Jetta is your equal—she will one day be a great beauty. As for her poverty, that can be no objection to you, for you inherit great wealth. Basil, swear to me that Gabriel's daughter shall be your future wife."

The blood rushed into his face and out again.

"You do not know what you say," he answered, hoarsely. "Ask anything but this, mother—anything but this!"

"It is my last request," she pleaded, wildly; "surely you cannot refuse it! My heart is set upon your marriage with Jetta. There is a weight on my conscience—I *must* provide for the child's future. If you love me, Basil, promise that you will marry Gabriel's daughter."

"Mother, I cannot!" he groaned, with averted face.

"And why?"

"Because *I am already married!*"

There was a moment of dead silence in the Cedar Chamber. Only the salt tide kept up its monotonous beat on the beach below the seawall.

"Married!—*you!*" gasped the sick woman. "When?—to whom?"

"Two years ago, in London, to one who had taken my heart by storm," he stammered. "Forgive me for keeping the matter a secret from you, mother—I feared to tell you about Vera—I feared your prejudice, your anger and——"

He had given her a fearful shock—she stared wildly.

"My prejudice—my anger! You torture me, Basil! Have you married some objectionable person, that you talk like this? Tell me the whole truth—hide nothing from me now, Basil—there is no time for further deception."

His iron-gray eyes were full of remorse and dread.

"God forbid that I should deceive you more," he said. "It is true that Vera was beneath me socially, as the world judges such matters, but why should we, Ame-

ricans, born and bred to consider all men and women equal, draw hateful lines of caste? Vera was good and beautiful—surely that is enough to say."

In spite of her ebbing strength she was still keen and comprehensive.

"Not every woman, though lovely and good, can be your equal, Basil. There must always be social distinctions in the world. Do you remember what you said to me at parting—you would stoop to nothing less than a princess—you believed few women were fit to mate with a Hawkstone?"

He colored painfully.

"Foolish words! I did not then know what love was; I had not felt its cruel power."

Her cold hands clutched his own.

"You evade me. Speak, speak, Basil, before I am past listening. Let me know the choice you have made."

The truth must be confessed. He could not lie to a dying woman.

"Her name was Vera Hawtree," he began. "She was an orphan, with—with—obscure antecedents. I first saw her at Muswell Hill, in the environs of London. It was a gala night. Crowds of people filled the circus there. A favorite *equestrienne* came riding into the ring. She was a mere child in years, and beautiful as an angel. I married her one week from that night and carried her away to the Continent."

Mrs. Hawkstone uttered a sharp cry.

"A circus-rider, Basil!"

"Yes; but do not condemn her unjustly. She had been bred to the profession by her father, and she was scarcely sixteen at the date of our marriage."

By a superhuman effort Mrs. Hawkstone raised herself on her pillow.

"That was two years ago, you say? Has your wife made you happy, Basil?—oh, my grand, proud darling—last but one, of the Hawkstones—have you yet regretted your choice?"

For his life he could not speak. She gave a despairing groan.

"You need not answer. I see it all in your face. A circus-rider! And this is the princess to whom you stooped — the woman who is to succeed me here on Tempest Island! God help you, Basil! The curse of the race has fallen on you early! You have wrecked your own life, and you have broken my heart, in my dying hour."

She fell suddenly back on the bed. He bent over her, tried to raise her.

"Speak to me again!" he cried, in bitter remorse; "even if it be to curse me!"

But there was no answer. In the arms of that idolized stepson who had dealt to her proud, patient heart the last blow that it was ever to know, the lady of Tempest Island lay stark and dead.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INLET HOUSE.

BASIL HAWKSTONE laid the dead woman back on the pillow, and, like a man in a dream, crossed to the cabinet in the corner, and unlocked the topmost drawer. It was full of papers, carefully arranged and labeled. He lifted one and read: "To be opened only by my son, Basil Hawkstone."

This held the secret of which she had spoken—some family secret, he felt, with instinctive dread. His hand shook visibly as he broke the seal. Standing by that bed of death, with the waning light falling mockingly on the paper, Basil Hawkstone read the story which his father's widow had concealed so long from the world, and which seemed, alas! to foreshadow future woe to himself.

Not a sound broke the silence. Like a statue he stood and read on and on to the last word—to the signature which she had made with trembling hand.

"My God!" burst from his pale lips.

He staggered back to the drawer, threw in the dreadful paper and turned the key upon it. Then he rang the bell furiously, and before the attendants had fairly

reached the chamber he was darting down the oaken stair, and out of the house into the gathering night.

The deep stone porch, the great seaward slope of garden, lay dim and quiet. He opened a side gate, and turned into the road which traversed the island from end to end. As he did so the solemn stroke of a bell rang through the twilight. It came from the island church, and after the fashion of an earlier day—old customs lingered long on the Tempest—it told the islanders that their sovereign lady had gone

"Through the steep and dreadful pass of death."

Slowly that bell kept knelling the years of the life just done. Hawkstone stopped at the gate and listened. Presently Joe Derby, the sexton, came forth, with a lantern in his hand.

"Lord love us!" he cried, at sight of Hawkstone. "Is it you, sir, grown brown and tall, but the same Mister Basil that used to help me break wild colts, and shoot partridges in the woods, and fish for cunners off the rocks! 'Twas I that tolled for your father the night he was killed, sir, and now I'm tolling for the poor lady. Well, well, we all go the same road at last. The island folks need you now, sir—I hope you've come to stay."

"Yes, Derby; I have come to stay."

Derby advanced nearer, and put his weather-beaten face close up to his young master's.

"I knew the poor lady's end was near, sir, for last night I saw a female figger, all in white, at the door of the family tomb yonder. Fact, sir! My knees bumped together, and I wilted down like a rag—I was that scart! It stood there, as white as foam, sir, and more than me has seen it, of late—some in one place, and some in another. I showed a light pair of heels down the road—that's what I did, sir!" with pride in his own prudence.

"Nonsense, Derby!" said Hawkstone. "You have too much sense to believe in ghosts."

Derby shook his head.

"Seeing is believing. There *is* a ghost rummaging round this island, sir—more'n one, for all *I* know—look out you don't come upon it yourself."

Hawkstone turned from the church-door and started for the beach. The tide was rolling in. A silver-gray fog had fallen like a vail on shore and sea; through it the rising moon made a faint luminous opening. Sheep-bells tinkled on invisible slopes. The beating of an unseen sail sounded from seaward. Leaving the landing-place behind him, Basil Hawkstone came to a bare, desolate beach, where a natural breastwork of sand-dunes, covered with long salt grass, protected the land from the ravages of the sea. Shut in a small, silent world of mist, he stumbled along the indistinct path, with a gray rim of water washing up on one side, and the long grass of the dunes rattling like spears on the other. Some low, red-brown cliffs loomed up before the island lord. He had to make his way cautiously around their base. It was a wild, lonely spot. The sound of surf on an outer ledge boomed through the fog. At last our pedestrian reached a columnar red rock, which bore grotesque resemblance to a female figure, and was called by the islanders the "Old Woman." This marked the union of forest and shore, for here a small bay or inlet went creeping up into a dense growth of cedar, hemlock and twisted pepper-idge-trees. A sedgy path led along the border of the inlet, and following it into the wood, Hawkstone espied before him a light.

Something dashed across his way. It was a wild deer, with soft, shining eyes. Owls hooted in the tree-tops. Hawkstone stumbled on over gnarled roots and through salt pools, and at the head of the inlet came to a square brown house, with dormer windows, like bulging eyes, in the roof, standing solitary in an opening of the wood.

The salt water, washing through the sedge, reached almost to the door-stone. A boat was moored on the bank. Mist and silence hung over everything. Hawkstone went up to the low door and rapped.

There was no answer. Again and again he repeated the summons. The silence of death reigned.

"Peg Patton! Are you there?" he shouted. "Open!"

"Who calls?" answered a gruff voice from within.

"Basil Hawkstone!"

A chain dropped on the inside, a bolt was drawn back. In the low door stood [illegible] with a lamp in her hand.

The handsome girl had now become a middle-aged woman, with a powerful frame and a heavy, sullen face, framed in iron-gray hair. She wore a red cotton gown, with a red handkerchief pinned about her muscular neck. Her sleeves, rolled up to the elbow, revealed arms capable of felling an ox. She held a cob pipe in her mouth, but drew it out to say, dryly:

"Come in, young master. So you've got back to the island at last? Lord knows you didn't hurry yourself! She that's just gone has been a-pining for you these months and years past."

"Then you know that she is dead?" said Hawkstone, in an unsteady voice.

"I heard the bell toll, sir," answered Peg Patton, briefly.

She motioned him into a little living-room, clean and bright, and with a driftwood fire burning cheerfully on the hearth. He looked splashed and haggard with his long tramp. This curled darling of fortune, this pleasure-loving, self-indulgent Prince Lucifer, had entered upon a new and unpleasant experience of life. Peg Patton advanced close up to him, still holding the lamp in her brawny hand.

"I know the errand that brought you here," she said, dryly. "*She* has told you everything."

"Yes," he acknowledged.

"And didn't you ever suspect the truth before, sir?"

"Great Heaven, no! How should I?"

Her swarthy face put on a sad, wistful look.

"Mister Basil, I loved your father once, and for a little while he pretended to love me. The lady that's gone loved him, too. Women do many strange things for love. You are like Philip, but handsomer, and with a lordlier air. Pray God you'll never work the woe he did, with his good looks and his flattering tongue! It's many a lonesome year I've passed in this Inlet house; it's many a lonesome year Jetta Hawkstone lived in her

fine hall, and whether we two did right or wrong—whether the work which we accomplished together was good or evil, God must judge! Now follow me."

She stepped out into a long, dark passage, which seemed to end in the solid wall. Peg put out her hand, however, and an aperture suddenly opened, so small that Hawkstone was forced to bow his tall head to pass through. Evidently this hidden door had been constructed for some peculiar purpose. Hawkstone now found himself in another room, far more pretentious than the first. It was luxuriously furnished in oak, with dark, rich carpet and hangings. A lamp, suspended from the ceiling, burned softly under a rose-colored shade. Below, on the floor, sat a female figure, playing with a pile of sea-shells. At sight of her, Basil Hawkstone paused, holding his breath.

Was it a woman or a spirit? From head to foot she was white and luminous, like Winter moonlight. She wore a long white cashmere gown, gathered about her waist with a white girdle. Her hair, blanched to the same hue as her dress, and braided in a loose plait, swept the floor as she sat. Her face, her hands, were like something cut from alabaster — perfect in symmetry, startling in color. With a slow, graceful motion she arose as Peg Patton and Hawkstone appeared.

"Here's a gentleman come to see you, madam," began Peg, her gruff voice growing soft and kind. The white lady looked at Hawkstone with large, gentle eyes, but did not speak. "Are the shells talking to-night, madam?" went on Peg, in the indulgent tone that one would use to a little child. "Do they tell you any stories?"

A far-away smile flitted over her frost-white face. She put a great shell, pink-fluted within, ribbed without in dusky brown, to her ear and listened.

"Yes," she answered, in a voice as gentle as her eyes, "they say strange things—things that quite frighten me, Peggy."

"Let us hear them, madam," coaxed Peg.

"They tell me that a stranger is coming to Tempest

Island to-night," said the white lady; "ah, these island folks do not like strangers!—a girl, with yellow hair, and she carries a firebrand in her little hand that will consume the whole place, and the glory of the Hawkstones with it! I hear one word over and over again: 'Woe!—woe!' The Hawkstone doom is coming upon us again."

"God forbid!" cried Hawkstone, involuntarily.

Peg Patton went a little nearer the moon-white figure, and said:

"Madam, do the shells tell you anything about your son—do they bring him to your remembrance? You once had a son, you know—try now to recollect."

"Oh, yes, I once had a son, Peggy—do you think I could forget my baby?" shaking her head sadly.

Peg grasped the white cashmere robe in strong appeal, as though she would in this way hold the wearer's darkened understanding.

"Madam, look at this gentleman—it is your little son Basil, grown to manhood—the child that was taken from you long ago—he has come here to see you for the first time. Not till to-night did he know that you still lived. He had quite ceased to think of the one that bore him."

There was a reproach in the words that Hawkstone did not fail to notice. The spirit-like woman surveyed him sadly, attentively, for a moment, then turned away with a disappointed air.

"No, no," she said; "it is *not* my baby, good Peggy—you *are* very good to me, very kind—I scarcely know how I should get on without you—we have lived a long time together; but you make mistakes sometimes, you know, and this is one."

Peg made a gesture to Hawkstone.

"Cannot you speak a word to her, sir? Maybe she would believe you."

In the presence of this strange mother—the cast-off, repudiated wife of Philip Hawkstone, whose name, till to-night, he could not remember to have ever heard, Basil stood aghast—overpowered. There she was—the tragic ghost of a day long dead—with the face of a ghost, too—with eyes out of which some dreadful shock had

for ever frightened the soul, a pale, unreal shadow of a woman—Jetta Hawkstone's predecessor. Her story, revealed to him now for the first time, burned his heart like fire. Involuntarily he bent the knee before her.

"My mother!" he groaned.

It was the name by which he had always called Jetta Hawkstone, but the utterance of it to this creature shook him to the core of his being. She came nearer, and peered into his face with a wan smile.

"Why do you call me that?" she sighed. "I have not heard the name for years and years—no, not since my baby boy Basil lisped it at my knee. I have searched a long time for Basil, but I have not found him yet—I shall never, never find him, I fear."

"I am he!" groaned Hawkstone.

Perplexed and distressed, she held out a hand to Peg.

"He frightens me, good Peggy!" she cried. "I wish you would send him away—I would sooner listen to my shells. I know their voice, but his is strange to me. Hark! Hear a prophecy from the sea!" And she suddenly pressed the pink-fluted shell to Hawkstone's ear. "Does it not say clearly: 'The yellow-haired girl is coming to the Tempest to-night. She carries a lighted torch. When she enters here, woe to the island, and to all that bear the name of Hawkstone'?"

Peg Patton saw her young master grow ashy pale.

"Great Heaven! how strange!" he muttered.

"She often has these moods, sir," explained Peg; "they come and go—one can't tell how. She hears queer stories in the shells, and she listens to 'em by the hour together. You mustn't mind her."

He reeled to his feet.

"There is something uncanny in it all," he muttered, "for a girl with yellow hair is actually coming to the Island to-night, and she is *my wife!*"

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS WIFE.

As Jetta Ravenel crept down the stair from Mrs. Hawkstone's death-chamber and opened the door of the

drawing-room, a drawling male voice saluted her in this wise :

"Enter, Miss Hornet—I am quite alone. Of course, nobody remembers *me* at a time like this. So Prince Lucifer has arrived, eh ? No use for me to go up—they wouldn't let me inside the door. I shall never be of any importance here till Prince Lucifer breaks his neck riding over the downs, or gets drowned off the cliffs. Don't cry any more—the Hawkstones must die, like meaner mortals, and it spoils your eyes—you have a pair, Miss Hornet, that ought to make your fortune."

The speaker, Vincent Hawkstone, was dawdling about the old room with his hands in his pockets, and a look of sulky discontent in his bold, knowing eyes.

"Who is Prince Lucifer ?" demanded the Creole girl.

"Why, my honorable cousin Basil, the Lord of Tempest Island, to be sure !" sneered Vincent ; "forgive my lack of reverence. Younger sons are always ne'er-do-wells in the Hawkstone family. My father before me was one. He squandered all he could get, and having been discarded by his brother Philip—*en passant*, Philip discarded several things in his short day—a wife, among the rest !—he died young in a foreign land. Prince Lucifer considers me a respectable sort of pauper !"—with an unpleasant laugh.

The Creole girl surveyed him with eyes full of dark disdain.

"I think you are a very envious and ill-natured person, Vincent," she said.

"Thank you, Miss Hornet—the time has come to talk plainly. I'll wager my aunt has left everything to Prince Lucifer—the rest of us must be his dependents. She would not deprive him of the pleasure of giving or withholding at his royal will. Of course, you have heard of the beastly entail on the Hawkstone possessions, put on two centuries ago, in genuine English fashion, and religiously adhered to by later generations—think of such a state of things, on an island only a few miles removed from the New England coast ! I hold that the younger branch of the family has for years been robbed to enrich

the elder; till, now, you find Prince Lucifer ridiculously rich, and I, his cousin, poor as a church mouse. Never mind!"—grinding his teeth—"I shall yet be lord of Tempest Island!"

She drew up her long white neck.

"Impossible! It belongs to your cousin and his male heirs."

"At present *I* am his male heir. He may never marry—he may never have a son—daughters, of course, don't signify—in either case I am *sure* to be master here some day."

"You are no friend to your cousin, or you would not talk like this."

"I never pretended to be," he answered, airily. "It seems, miss, that you think yourself called to defend him, because my aunt has chosen you to be his future wife."

She was a child, as yet, with the heart of a child. She stared with large, astonished eyes.

"How insolent you are?"

He laughed again.

"What! has she never told you!"

"Certainly not!"

"Very odd! Everybody at Tempest Island knows that you have been selected for Prince Lucifer. Yes, 'pon my soul you must make up your mind to fall in love with him straightway." He glanced at her, smiling, and through half closed eyelids. "I wish from my heart that you had been destined for *me* instead; but there's no such luck for a younger son."

"Vincent Hawkstone, do you think this a seasonable time for jesting? Don't talk to me any more—I am sick of you!" making a queenly little gesture.

He drew out his watch with great *sang froid*.

"Very well, Miss Hornet. Twenty minutes past the hour, and no dinner yet! Nothing puts me out so much as to wait for dinner. Hark! what's that?"

A sudden rush of feet through the hall.

"Oh," gasped Jetta, "Mrs. Hawkstone is dead," and she rushed from the room, leaving Vincent alone by the fire.

Presently the church-bell began to toll.

"Let them mourn who will profit by her death," muttered the young barbarian. "*I* am not of that number. Beastly confusion. There isn't a chance of a decent meal to-night." He rang the bell. A frightened maid servant answered it. "Bring me something hot," grumbled Vincent, "and a bottle of wine. The cook has evidently forgotten the hour."

"Oh, sir, Mrs. Hawkstone——"

"Deuce take you! Yes, I know—all the same, produce the provender!"

Vincent was no favorite at Tempest Hall; indeed, all the island people feared and disliked him. The maid fled, and returned directly with a bowl of *bouillon*, half a roasted fowl and the wine. The young fellow had just settled himself to a comfortable repast when the brass knocker clanged loudly.

"Ten thousand fiends! who is coming to interrupt me now?" he muttered.

The drawing-room door flew open, and a smart French maid entered, bearing a child in her arms. Close on her heels followed a lady in traveling garb, *petite*, blonde, beautiful. A grizzled boatman brought up the rear, his arms overflowing with bags and wraps and parcels manifold.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" the *petite* lady was piping, in a shrill treble, as she came flashing across the threshold after the maid. "Is *this* the place? Dismal as the grave! The desert island of Robinson Crusoe! Are you sure, boatman, that you have all the bags? Let some of the servants here help you up with the trunks. Very sorry that we brought so many, for it is quite evident that we shall not remain long in this howling wilderness."

The boatman beat a retreat, and Vincent arose to meet these invaders, in wonder and disgust.

"Who are *you*?" demanded the little blonde lady.

"My name is Vincent Hawkstone," he answered, secretly wishing her in the Red Sea.

She gave him a quick, penetrating glance. She was a

fairy-like creature, delicate as a flower, and, as it seemed to Vincent, not more than sixteen.

"Indeed!" she answered. "I have heard Basil speak of you. You are the scapegrace of the family, are you not? Oh, this is so *outré*, so horrid! Where is my husband? Why is he not here to meet me?"

Vincent gave an unpleasant start.

"Your husband, madam? Who is he?"

She surveyed him with two large, surprised eyes, like fringed gentians.

"Don't you know? I am Basil Hawkstone's wife, and this is his daughter," with a nod to the child, who was kicking and screaming in the French maid's arms. "How blank you look! Can't you understand? Basil and I made a secret marriage in London—at least, *he* has kept it secret, I hear—a genuine love match, sentimental people would call it. Oh, I am quite wearied to death!" tossing off her hat and wraps impatiently. "Where *is* Basil? He was in such haste to reach his mother that he started in advance, you see, and left me to follow with all these incumbrances."

It was a staggering blow. Basil married, and a daughter! But daughters, after all, did not count. He was still his cousin's male heir.

"I always said Basil was a sly dog," he managed to stammer. "As for his taste, it is excellent. But let me tell you, Mrs. Hawkstone, you've upset all the family plans by this *coup de maitre*. My aunt had a wife selected here for Basil. It's certain there would have been no end of a row if you had appeared earlier at the island. Luckily for you, she is now dead, and Basil—don't know, I'm sure, where *he* can be. He ought to introduce you to the household, of course. I'll ring."

He rang accordingly, and the servant who answered the bell said that Mr. Hawkstone was not in the house. He had gone out a full half-hour before, whither nobody knew.

"I'll find him!" volunteered Vincent; and he rushed from the room and began to search everywhere for his cousin. All that he discovered was Jetta Ravenel, lying

in a heap on the floor of the stone porch. He snatched her up, heedless of her tear-stained face, and drew her into the hall.

"You've lost your future husband!" he cried, exultantly. "Heaven be praised! the match is off! Now, perhaps, you'll take up with me, eh? Come in and make the acquaintance of Basil's wife and daughter. She's pretty as a pink, by Jove! but a rank plebeian, I suspect—picked out of the gutter for her beauty. It's well for her that my aunt is dead. Pray come in!" and he drew the dumfounded girl straight into the drawing-room, and with malicious triumph presented her to Basil Hawkstone's wife.

The latter, divested of her wraps, and with all her exceeding blonde beauty fully revealed, had seated herself to the soup and chicken left by Vincent, and was attacking both with great relish. She stopped long enough to stare at Jetta and nod coldly.

"Basil has disappeared," announced Vincent; "he can't be found."

"How strange and how provoking!" she frowned. "Well, ring for more chicken, Cousin Vincent, and some palatable kind of sweets. I adore sweets of the French sort. We have just come from Paris, you know. And order the servants to prepare our rooms, and take away these traps, and make us comfortable generally. Is this girl one of the household?" with a hostile glance at Jetta.

"Yes," replied Vincent, airily, "she's the young person that you have superseded here, whose matrimonial prospects you have annihilated, you know!" He rang the bell, and gave her orders with wicked glee. "Shall I pour you a glass of wine, madam? You may as well make yourself at home before Basil puts in an appearance. You are now the lady of the island, and a rare one you promise to be. Quite a contrast to the haughty dames who have ruled before you. Permit me to say that your arrival interrupted my dinner, so I suppose I may join you now—ha! ha! I little thought of such a turn to my informal meal."

"Join me? Of course," responded Mrs. Hawkstone, gaily. "I perceive that it is deadly dull here—I shall be giving unpardonable company. Only a drop of the wine—Basil never allows me to taste it—he is a perfect despot, you know."

"Certainly I know, but fortunately Basil is not present, so let us be merry," chuckled Vincent.

The presence of death in the house did not affect this boy and girl—for they were only that. The amazed and scandalized servants brought in more eatables, and the two fell upon them with the appetite peculiar to youth and a good digestion. They laughed, they jested. The French maid had carried away the child, and they paid no heed to Jetta—at least, the blonde did not; but Vincent, turning suddenly, found himself transfixed by the Creole girl's wonderful eyes.

"Well, my little patrician," he sneered, "what do you think of all this?"

She *was* patrician to her finger-tips, and her arching neck and the curl of her red lip answered him in advance of her tongue.

"I think it an outrage on good taste and good feeling alike," she said, coldly. "I cannot imagine how any well-bred person can be guilty of such behavior."

The blood flew into Vera Hawkstone's snowdrop face.

"You should not question my good-breeding," she answered, with a mocking little laugh, "since I owe what I possess entirely to Basil—*he* has trained me in the customs of good society. Why, I even dropped my *h's* before he took me in hand, and disdained the alphabet altogether."

"You are jesting," said Vincent, gallantly. "I am sure he must have married you out of some noble family. You look as if the blood of all the Howards—the genuine blue fluid, you know—was in your veins."

She laughed again till the old room rang.

"You are very sharp for a hobbledehoy!" And her violet eyes danced under their long black fringes. "Now I dare say you have heard of me—yes, I am sure my name *must* have traveled to this stupid side of the At-

lantic." She leaned forward and laid one wee white hand impressively on Vincent's arm. "Think a moment. Did you never read in those dear delightful newspapers about the Matchless Star of the Ring, the Child Queen of the Arena, the Wonderful Mademoiselle Zephyr, greatest of all living female riders?"

"Never!" answered Vincent, opening his eyes wide. "By Jove! You don't mean to say——"

"Oh, yes, I do," she answered, gayly shaking her curly yellow head. "The first time I ever saw Basil, he was in the front row of the circus at Muswell Hill, with a lot of other swells, you know—how they did applaud me that night, and Basil in particular! – oh, I can see it all now—the ring, the crowded seats, the musicians, the lights and Ali, my white Arabian, and Cuddy, the clown, who was wildly in love with me—absurd creature!—and Hatton, of the 'Royal,' who used to scold me so, and pet me, too, for I always drew a crowd. Yes, it comes back—that dear, delightful time!" with a pensive, wistful smile; "and a week after our first meeting, Basil married me in London, and I never rode again."

"Heaven above!" cried Vincent, starting up in his chair; "Prince Lucifer married to a circus rider—beg pardon! a professional *equestrienne*—a—a—oh, this is too much! Jetta, do you hear? You look as though you were petrified—Jetta——"

His remarks ended there, for the door was opened abruptly, and on its threshold stood Basil Hawkstone, looking in on the hilarious little feast, with his brown brows knitted ominously over his iron-gray eyes.

"Vera!" he cried out, in a shocked, astonished voice.

"Where in the world have you been, Basil?" she stammered. "It was horrid of you to make me come here alone. Such a dreadful place, too! I am dying of homesickness already."

"I should never have dreamed it," he answered, dryly. "You seem to be enjoying yourself hugely. How are you, Vincent?" He shook hands, rather coldly, with his cousin. "Do either of you know that my stepmother is lying dead above-stairs?"

Both Mrs. Hawkstone and Vincent looked abashed; then the latter shrugged his shoulders.

"In my interest for the living, I quite forgot the dead. I have been cultivating the acquaintance of your distinguished wife, Mademoiselle Zephyr. By my soul, Prince Lucifer, who would have dreamed that you, of all men, would have made such a marriage?

"'Oh, rank is good, and gold is good,
And high and low mate ill;
But Love hath never known a law
Beyond his own sweet will.'"

The taunting tone brought the blood into Hawkstone's haughty face, but he did not answer—he had espied Jetta Ravenel making for a door at the other end of the room. He put himself before her, and, with one annihilating glance at Vincent, took her hand kindly and led her to his wife.

"Vera," he said, "my mother owed to this young girl an enormous debt, which we must now pay. She is left to our charge—we must be very, very kind to her."

In her dazzling pink-and-white beauty, with her yellow hair in a curly fluff about her brows, the new lady of Tempest Hall stood and stared hard at Jetta Ravenel. It was a cold, cruel look, full of instinctive aversion.

"I know nothing about your mother's debts," she sneered; "I care less! This is the girl she wanted you to marry, Basil – your cousin has been telling me about it—the girl who has all the breeding and the blue blood that *I* lack. You expect me to be friends with her? I fear I shall have to disappoint you, for," —leaning toward him, with red lip curled, and dropping her voice a trifle—"I hate her already with my whole heart!"

CHAPTER IX.

TROUBLE BREWING.

THREE days later, Philip Hawkstone's widow was laid by the side of her husband in the family tomb of the Hawkstones.

Prince Lucifer and his fair girl wife led the funeral procession, as it wound through the gate of Tempest Hall, and along the road to the island churchyard.

Unspeakably fair and childish Vera looked in her sombre mourning. Every eye was turned curiously on the new island lady—the dazzling, yellow-haired English girl that Hawkstone had brought from over the sea.

"She's a blazing beauty—that she is!" was the unanimous whispered comment of the islanders.

After the wedded pair followed Jetta Ravenel and Vincent Hawkstone, both in decorous black. All the island people brought up the rear. Conspicuous among these was Peg Patton, with her muscular figure and sombre face.

She spoke to no one, and looked only at Basil Hawkstone and his English wife. Vincent, pressing close to Jetta Ravenel, whispered behind the hat which he, like all the other males in the *cortége*, carried in his hand:

"Believe me, we shall see lively times at Tempest Hall now. Prince Lucifer has made a shocking match—yes, by Jove! it's a wonder my aunt doesn't turn in her casket. After all, there *must* be something in this talk about the Hawkstone doom, you know. We *do* seem to be a deuced unlucky lot in our matrimonial ventures."

Jetta flashed him a mute, indignant glance.

"My high and mighty Southern princess," he muttered, mockingly, "I fancy *you* will find little pleasure in the new *régime*. That girl, in spite of her kittenish ways, has sharp claws, and she will not scruple to use them."

She deigned not a syllable in answer. On went the procession down to the chilly gloom of the family tomb, which stood open to admit the newcomer.

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust!"

The casket was deposited on the floor in the centre of the vault. The island people crowded around it for a last look at the dead. Jetta, separated now from Vincent Hawkstone, found herself effaced, overlooked—pushed up against the moldy wall. In the days since Mrs. Hawkstone's death she had been intensely miser-

able. She did not like Basil Hawkstone, or that bold, quick-tongued Vincent; and Vera, the dazzling little blonde who had stepped into her dead friend's place, she instinctively distrusted—yea, detested. In Basil Hawkstone's wife she felt that she had found a cruel enemy. The warm, high heart of the Southern girl was aching now as it had never ached before. She saw Prince Lucifer bend down and kiss his mother's cold face, and then pass hurriedly out of the vault. Vera, with a relieved look, followed. Vincent came next, then the servants of the house and the island people. Jetta herself was the last one left by the dead.

With a passionate burst of grief she flung herself across the coffin, and laid her cheek to that other cheek on the satin pillow. It was the voice of Joe Derby, the sexton, that aroused her at last.

"The others have all gone, miss," he said. "Better hurry after 'em. It's getting late, and the chill of this place strikes to one's marrow."

Jetta staggered back a step, and fell senseless to the floor of the vault.

Joe Derby's back was toward her. He was screwing down the coffin-lid, and he neither saw nor heard the fall. Already it was growing dark in the tomb. Joe had no liking for the society of dead folks. With all possible speed he stumbled out of the place, locked the iron door, and went off along the island road as fast as his legs could carry him.

Meanwhile, in the drawing-room at Tempest Hall the family had gathered to listen to the reading of the will. The bequests were few. To Jetta Ravenel were given the testatrix's jewels and wardrobe, and the document directed Basil Hawkstone to educate said Jetta in the most liberal manner, and provide for her future from the dead woman's fortune. Peg Patton received a legacy of five thousand dollars for her devotion to the Hawkstones, and smaller sums were given to the household servants and to some of the old island people. The remainder of the testatrix's possessions passed entire to her stepson, Basil Hawkstone, and to his heirs for ever.

"To him that hath shall be given," muttered Vincent Hawkstone, as he listened sulkily to the document which ignored his own existence.

The servants went out first, Mrs. Hawkstone's attorney followed. Then Vincent stepped forward to make his *adieux* with his cousin.

"I may as well go over to the mainland in the same boat with the lawyer," he muttered. "Of course I return to college to-morrow."

Prince Lucifer held out his hand in a lordly, condescending way.

"Be a good boy, Vincent. My mother, in her last letters, hinted that you were growing wild. See that you don't disgrace the name of Hawkstone."

Vincent shot a half-veiled look of intense hatred at his cousin.

"Your mother was no friend of mine, Prince Lucifer, as you can see by her will. I shall have my fling, as you, doubtless, have had yours," staring pointedly at Mrs. Vera, "and I promise you I'll not disgrace the name—any more than you have done, my dear Mentor! I find it deuced unpleasant, sometimes, squeezing along on a mere pittance, and associating, at the same time, with rich men's sons—fellows with full purses, you know. By good rights, Prince Lucifer, you ought to increase my allowance."

"You have debts?" said Hawkstone.

"Yes," acknowledged Vincent, "in a temporary embarrassment the other fellows never refuse aid to a Hawkstone. Our family name—luckily for a poor devil like me—is a power in some quarters."

Prince Lucifer's superb eyes wore an indulgent rather than censorious expression.

"Your allowance shall be increased, and your obligations canceled; and henceforth, when you fall into temporary embarrassment, you must apply to *me* for help, not to your college friends."

"Trust me, I will!" cried Vincent, with alacrity. "I wanted to say good-by to Jetta Ravenel, but she is not here, so I must leave my farewells with you. Now that

I think of it, I have not seen her ladyship since we came back from the tomb."

"Do you know where Miss Ravenel is hiding, Vera?" said Basil Hawkstone to his wife.

She was reclining in an easy-chair before the wood fire, fingering, with a critical air, the plaits of her mourning gown. Her yellow head leaned upon a crimson cushion, her snowdrop face looked more dazzling than ever against this dark background.

"I do not know, Basil," she answered, indifferently, "and, really, I do not care. I am not the girl's keeper."

The attorney's snuff-colored coat was vanishing along the old sea-wall at the foot of the garden. With a careless good-by Vincent followed it.

There was silence for a moment in the drawing-room. Mrs. Vera looked up at her magnificent young husband with two violet eyes of softest fire.

"I am quite hideous in this mourning stuff, am I not, Basil?" she said.

"Good Heaven! the insatiable vanity of women!" he answered, impatiently. "You well know the color was never invented that could make you hideous, Vera!"

"Thanks, my lord! How stern and sour you are today! Now, when are we to leave this dreadful island? Of course there can be no reason why we should remain here longer. I really feel thankful that a kind fate spared me an encounter with your mother, Basil! She was too grand a dame," with a little derisive laugh, "to receive kindly a daughter-in-law from the circus-ring. How you wince, dear, when I allude to *that!* Besides, I spoiled her plan to marry you to that girl Jetta. No, she *never* would have liked me, nor the poor dear baby either! I told Celeste not to unpack the trunks, as I knew we should not stay here many hours, so I am quite ready for an early start."

The firelight flashed up in his handsome young face, and plainly revealed its weary, annoyed expression.

"You had better countermand that order at once," he answered, dryly, "for we shall not leave Tempest Island for months—perhaps years—to come. I am needed here."

She stared in blank horror.

"Basil Hawkstone! You never mean to keep me permanently on this island?"

A shadow crossed his face.

"Be reasonable, Vera—we *must* live here. I cannot explain—and it is best that I should not, for you are scarcely the person to be intrusted with family secrets; but my presence is required here, both by my island folks and—others. And after all"—trying to speak cheerfully—"this old sea-nest of the race is not such a bad place! We are sovereigns here, you and I; our word is law, our subjects, though few, are exceedingly loyal."

Her violet eyes grew black with wrath.

"What do I care for such petty sovereignty as this?" she sneered; "I who have ruled thousands, as you well know! What do I care for your island people, or your family secrets? I want to go back to London to Paris—to our old life there—you almost make me add—to the gay, dizzy, beautiful *ring!*"

She had leaped to her feet, palpitating, burning with sudden passion; lightnings filled her eyes; she had a dangerous look.

"The ring!" echoed Hawkstone, stirred to the depths of his heart. "Great Heaven! how dare you mention such a thing, Vera?—you, the wife, the mother, of a Hawkstone? Is it not enough——" She caught the sentence from his lips with a mocking, mirthless laugh.

"That you took me out of the place of clowns and sawdust, and did me the honor to marry me? No, it is *not* enough, sir. I was not born to drag out existence in a prison, or to be the slave of any man's whims. I want life—real life—happiness, excitement—praise, worship—I will not be controlled or fettered—I *will* have my day!"

His face was like a thunder-cloud.

"You are a foolish, unreasonable child, Vera—spoiled by too much flattery—too much of what you call real life, though Heaven knows that it is not the name which *I* should apply to it! We have had a surfeit of Paris and London gayety already——"

A rap on the door interrupted him.

"Oh, sir," called a voice outside, "we cannot find Jetta Ravenel anywhere — she has not been seen since the burial. What is to be done, sir?"

He flung back the door, and saw Mrs. Otway, the housekeeper, standing at the threshold, pale and frightened.

"Great Heaven! I had forgotten the girl!" he muttered. "I will go myself to look for her."

"She may have jumped into the sea to escape life on this wretched island," sneered Vera.

Hawkstone snatched up his hat, secretly glad that the quarrel with his wife had been interrupted. The next moment he was out under the chestnut-trees of the garden—under the stars of twilight. Where was that tiresome Creole girl? He had last seen her at the tomb. He dashed out of the gate, and down the road till he came to the cottage occupied by Joe Derby. A loud rap brought the old sexton to the door.

"Give me the key of the vault and a lantern!" cried Hawkstone, and snatching these articles from his servant, he started for the churchyard.

If the girl had indeed been locked into the family tomb, she was probably dead with fright by this time. Dismayed, conscience-smitten, he tore across the green mounds and approached the vault. As he did so he saw a woman standing before its grim door in an attitude of patient waiting. It was the white lady of Peg Patton's Inlet house.

There, at that hour and alone! A long cloak of spotless wool hung from her shoulders, and a hood of the same was drawn over her hair. More like a disembodied spirit than a creature of flesh and blood, she advanced to meet Hawkstone.

"Sir," she said, in an anxious voice, "I heard that the person known as Philip Hawkstone's widow was to be buried here to-day."

"The burial is over," he answered, in a shaken voice. Her large, gentle eyes grew troubled.

"Oh, it is sad that I am so late!" she sighed. "I ought to have been in time, I ought to have seen her

face once more. Perhaps you do not know what that face did for me in life? No? How could you? Oh, sir! tell me where they have buried her; is it here?" putting one of her marble hands on the iron door of the tomb. "You are going in?" as he thrust the key into the lock. "Pray, pray," her voice like a pleading child's, "take me with you!"

He nodded, but could not speak.

The two stepped down into the vault. What strange sound leaped to meet Basil Hawkstone from the awful gloom of the place? A girl's voice, strong, sweet and without a quaver, singing among the dead and buried Hawkstones, these lines of Toplady's hymn:

> "'When I draw this fleeting breath,
> When my eyelids close in death,
> When I soar to worlds unknown,
> And behold Thee on Thy throne,
> Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in Thee!'"

Jetta Ravenel was sitting on the floor by Mrs. Hawkstone's coffin. He could see her young face shining in the darkness.

"Oh, it is you!" she said, rising quietly, as her deliverer appeared. "I was quite sure that *somebody* would come for me."

She was not dead with fright, nor did she show any particular agitation; but she looked with wonder at Hawkstone's companion, who was pressing close to him with a dazed, lost air.

"Sir," implored the white lady, "take me to that woman—put my hand on her coffin-lid."

He made a reassuring gesture to Jetta, and led the spirit-like creature to Mrs. Hawkstone's casket. Standing beside it, Jetta Ravenel heard her utter these words in a sad, gentle voice:

"You that was called Philip Hawkstone's wife. I cursed you living, and now I curse you dead!"

"Stop!" entreated Hawkstone. "Think again: you do not, you cannot mean that!"

She meditated for a moment. Then a wan smile, like moonlight, dawned on her lips. For the second time she laid her ivory fingers impressively on the lid of the casket.

"Jetta Hawkstone, I cursed you living, but I bless you dead!"

The next moment she turned and glided out of the tomb. Hawkstone and the Creole girl followed, but before they could reach the outer air the white figure had been joined at the churchyard-gate by Peg Patton, and the two were moving off together into the falling night.

"You have witnessed a strange scene, Miss Ravenel," said Hawkstone, in a husky voice. "You must never, never breathe a word of this to anybody living."

"I never will!" she answered, simply.

"And now, how did you happen to be locked in that vault?"

"I fainted and fell," she answered. "I had eaten nothing since—since Mrs. Hawkstone's death. Derby would not have seen me. When I awoke I found myself alone with those dead people."

"And you were wild with fright, poor child!"

"Oh, no," she corrected, gravely; "I did not *dare* to be afraid. I tried to sing, and forget where I was."

"You brave girl!" he cried, involuntarily; "few men or women would have stood the ordeal better!"

They went back to Tempest Hall. Mrs. Vera, still lazily reclining before the fire, heard Jetta's story with a derisive little laugh.

"*Dame!* as the French say; what a troublesome creature you are!" she cried. "Did you want to get up a little resurrection of your own? You have set everybody in the house by the ears. If I am to remain at Tempest Hall—which the gods forbid—it will not be under the same roof with *you*. I must be allowed to choose my own companions, and no blue-blooded pauper, with a grand air and a long pedigree, will be of the number."

Jetta Ravenel started for the door, looking like an outraged princess.

"Sampson has an errand to the mainland to-night,"

she said, with quiet dignity; "I shall go with him. Farewell, Mr. Hawkstone."

He put himself before her.

"You cannot leave Tempest Hall to-night, Miss Ravenel. My mother's will makes you my ward. To-morrow I shall place you at school for a term of years. I am now your guardian, and you must obey me."

Her Southern blood was up—she stared at him with splendid, scornful eyes.

"Obey you?—Never! I decline your charity. I deny your authority. I have no guardian but my half-brother Gabriel, and he is far away. Your mother was my good friend, Mr. Hawkstone, but she is now dead, and I mean to return at once to the South. I should richly deserve your wife's insults if I could stoop to accept further benefits from any one bearing your name."

He smiled grimly.

"You are not lacking in spirit, it seems. I do not ask you to accept benefits, but only to allow me to discharge the debt which I owe to Gabriel Ravenel's daughter. Surely my mother must have told you that such a debt existed, and that she was likely to leave it, as a bitter legacy, to me?"

Jetta inclined her shining dark head. The dead Mrs. Hawkstone had often talked to her of this very matter.

"Then," continued Hawkstone, coldly, "you see that in attempting to carry out my mother's wishes concerning you, I seek to be just, not generous."

He turned to his wife with something in his gray eyes that made her quail.

"Vera," he said, "I beg you will make a proper apology to Miss Ravenel. You can scarcely understand her position in this house, but be assured it is not that of a dependent!"

"You talk in riddles, Basil," pouted the little blonde. "I am glad that I do *not* comprehend your family affairs."

But she made a sulky apology, and Jetta received it with a cold bow, and went quickly out. Then uprose Vera and stamped her tiny foot.

"You have humiliated me before that girl, Basil, and I detest her more than ever for it!"

He looked fatigued and exasperated.

"Do I not tell you, Vera, that I owe unutterable things to the family of Ravenel? I command you to treat the girl with civility during the little time that she remains at Tempest Hall. After to-morrow you will probably never see her again."

"I hope not—I trust not. Basil, look me in the face—do you think I am a person that can safely be *commanded?*"

He turned slowly, and looked down on the witchery of blue eyes and yellow locks and pearly color—the beauty which had entrapped him, and made him throw prudence and pride to the winds.

"'A rosebud set with little willful thorns,'"

he muttered. "Vera, Vera, what a life you have led me in the last two years, to be sure!"

She tossed her yellow head. At best, they were but a pair of foolish young creatures.

"I see! You are growing tired of me already, Basil!"

"Not tired of *you*," the young husband answered; "but tired of your moods, your follies, Vera."

She laughed.

"'It is a little rift within the lute,
That by-and-by will make the music mute,
And, ever widening, slowly silence all.'

You see, I can quote poetry, too," she answered, saucily. "You tried to cultivate me after I left the ring, you know. Well, to tell the truth, I am tired of you, too, Basil—tired of *your* moods, your tyranny. Our marriage began with an unlimited amount of passion of the Marc Antony kind. Don't you remember that you used to say to me in the first days of our honeymoon, 'All for love, and the world well lost'? Yes, it began that way, but how will it end?"

And Hawkstone, gazing gloomily down into the fire, answered, under his breath:

"God only knows!"

CHAPTER X.

ON THE SHORE.

THE next day Jetta Ravenel went away to school, and the island knew her no more for years.

Luncheon was over at Tempest Hall, and Basil Hawkstone stood at a window, looking out on the windy downs and the wide blue sea.

"I wish, Vera," he said, "that I could interest you a little in my island people."

She was playing with her child, a pale, puny year-old, dressed in a fleece of finest embroidery. In truth, she looked like a child herself, with her curly gold tresses and dimpled, dazzling fairness. As her husband spoke she tossed the little island heiress irritably into the arms of her nurse.

"You cannot, Basil," she answered, frowning. "Emphatically you cannot! I want to go to some of your American watering-places—Newport or Saratoga. This island will do very well for Bee and her nurse, perhaps, but not for *me;* and as for the people here, what are they to me, pray, and why should I interest myself in them?"

His love for her was still strong. With a mischievous light in his gray eyes, he said:

"Come to the window, Vera, and see a product of this despised island waiting here for your acceptance."

She went curiously. In the gravel driveway by the stone porch stood a man servant holding two horses, one, saddled for a lady's use, was a snow-white beauty,

> —"iron-sinewed and satin-skinned,
> Ribbed like a drum, and limbed like a deer."

His arching neck and eye of liquid fire made Vera Hawkstone clap her hands rapturously.

"Oh, Basil, do you mean that beautiful darling for *me?*—do you?"

"Yes, he is yours, Vera," Hawkstone answered, lightly. "Fine horses have long been a special product of the island. Harris, the overseer, sends a large number yearly to the mainland markets. Come, make ready, and

we will take a gallop across my little kingdom, and you shall see something more of it than can be discerned from these windows."

She flew off like a bird. In an incredibly short time she was back again, dressed in a close habit of dark-blue cloth, with a cream-colored plume in her round hat, and cream-colored gauntlets on her little white hands. Her blue eyes danced with delight. Without any assistance from her husband or the waiting groom, she sprang into the saddle and began to caress the silvery neck and abundant mane of the animal with more fondness than she ever bestowed on little Bee, for Vera Hawkstone was not an affectionate mother.

"Oh, what a darling!" she cried. "In the whole world there is nothing I love like a good horse. Don't frown, Prince Lucifer—it is a passion born with me. That which is bred in the bone must come out in the flesh, you know."

They cantered out through the gate into the island road, and away over the undulating commons, swept now by a salt wind from the sea. She rode marvelously well, sitting as square as a die on her saddle and swaying lightly, easily, to every movement of the animal—a thorough horsewoman, well trained in her art. Hawkstone had his match to keep pace with her. She looked back at him gayly, her yellow hair blown in clusters over her pale, star-like face, the fever of old desires waking in her eyes.

"I shall call this beast Ali," she cried; "after the Arabian that I used to ride in Hatton's Royal Circus—don't you remember? How I have mourned for poor Ali, though he *was* a vicious brute, and came within an ace of killing me in the ring, one night, in Liverpool. Now your face grows thunderous, Prince Lucifer—by-the-way, Vincent's nickname suits you admirably. You do not like to hear me talk of my past life."

"Very true," he answered, dryly.

"But I must, sometimes. It comes before me with such force that I should die if I could not speak of it. My father taught me to ride when I wasn't much more

than a baby. He was a groom—but you wince, so let that pass. At least, he knew what good riding was, and he used to say, even then, that I was born for the saddle and nothing else. Poor papa! when I was twelve years old he went to ride in Hatton's Royal Circus and took me with him; and a year after he was killed one night, doing a double *pirouette* on horseback—he had been drinking, or something. I was heartbroken for a while, but everybody in the 'Royal,' from Hatton himself to the boys about the vans, petted me continually, and just then I made a great hit riding Ali, and so I was consoled. Don't you remember the night I first saw you, Basil—how the people were applauding me?"

"I remember everything, Vera," he answered, with a mortified look. "Heaven knows your early education was sadly neglected. I have tried—have I not?—to teach you something in the two years that you have been my wife?"

She tossed her yellow curls.

"Pooh! dry, bookish stuff! I was not born to be a scholar. I care only for a horse like Ali, and a suitable place in which to try his mettle."

He frowned.

"My stables are full of horses, all as good as Ali, and you have the whole island for your riding-ground."

She gave a short laugh.

"*Here*—this Robinson Crusoe desert? Basil, I want an audience, lights, music, and plenty of applause. To be admired, worshiped, is life itself to some women."

His handsome brows contracted ominously.

"Vera, what folly are you talking? Let us not jest on such a subject. You are now my wife, and you are to live for me, and me only. If you gave up some things for my sake, there are others, remember, that I also relinquished for yours."

"Yes," she answered, mockingly, "that black-browed Creole girl who left the island this morning!"

"Nonsense!" he cried, sharply. "You know what I mean—the approval of friends, and, in a measure, my own social position. But we will not talk further of this matter—it is not to my taste."

"Very well," she answered, indifferently, and urged Ali forward over the gray slopes, her yellow hair streaming like a torrent of raveled silk in the salt sea-wind. The beast was all force and fire, his rider all ease and plastic beauty. In an immense grain-field, some of the island workmen looked up from their labors to stare at the new island lady flashing by on that silver-white horse —the new island lady, about whom they already began to talk in whispers—so soon do the secrets of the drawing-room become the gossip of the kitchen and stable-yard. Not a man or woman of the hundred dependents of the island but what knew already that Basil Hawkstone had married a "regular she-cat"—a foreign circus-rider who hated the island and all upon it.

Presently the wedded pair passed through a barred gate, and emerged on a great pasture, where a thousand sheep were cropping the short, sweet grass. The whole flock made a rush for the two riders, bleating a joyful welcome, and crowding close to the horses in eager expectancy.

"I surmise," said Hawkstone, "that they are looking for the salt which the herdsmen bring them. As the horse is the only animal that interests you, Vera, let us go on."

Again they dashed off across scarred hillsides and bleak moorland, their beasts leaping watercourses and tussocks, and plunging through patches of dense forest, with the skill of the island-born horse. It was a wild place—this kingdom of the Hawkstones. The Atlantic thundered roughly on its shores. Along the lonely beaches the fish-hawks screamed noisily from their big, ugly nests. Some crows that had come down from the wood for shore-refuse, circled, ill-omened, over the heads of the two riders. The sun had disappeared, and over a western headland ranks of purple clouds were gathering rapidly for a storm.

"I cannot imagine," chafed Vera, "how a person of your wealth and importance can live at Tempest Island, even for a day, Basil! What solitude! what desolation! Oh, here comes the rain! Whither shall we go? I

do not see a house in any direction, and we shall be drenched."

They had reached the low cliffs at the entrance to Peg's Inlet. She checked Ali in the very shadow of that red columnar rock called the "Old Woman." Crack! went a peal of thunder overhead. A blue blaze of lightning filled their faces. Vera screamed, and both horses began to prance. In a moment the tempest was upon them.

"You must come with me, Vera; there's no help for it," muttered Hawkstone. "It is too late to reach the Hall. This way." And he turned Ali's head, and the two flew into the forest path leading up to Peg Patton's lonely house.

Down came the rain in blinding sheets. Hawkstone snatched his wife from the saddle and dashed into a little living-room, where sat Peg Patton, with needle and mesh-block, mending nets.

"Pardon our unceremonious entrance, Peggy," said Hawkstone. "In this tempest we had no choice but to thrust ourselves upon you without asking."

She rose up, swarthy and grim, and flung her work into a corner. Her brown feet were bare, and her big arms also. Her scanty skirts revealed her thick ankles. She looked like a female Samson.

"What a dreadful creature!" thought Vera Hawkstone.

Peg thrust forward some splint-bottomed chairs for her guests.

"You are welcome, master," she said, simply, "and your wife also," fixing a sharp eye on Vera. "You have brought a pretty bird to your old sea-nest, sir. Will she be torn, do you think, like them that came before her?"

"Heaven forbid!" muttered Hawkstone.

Vera, with her dark-blue habit gathered about her, sat down, looking around the quaint old room like an amused child.

"Do you live all alone in this queer place?" she said to Peg.

"Not altogether," answered Peg, calmly. "The sea

comes up to the door and talks to me, and the woods are full of blackbirds and thrushes, not to speak of the fish-hawks that keep me company from May to October."

Hawkstone was moving uneasily about the room, his tall head reaching almost to the low rafters, his lordly step ringing on the sanded floor. The pelting of rain and the cracking of thunder prohibited much conversation. Suddenly there was a crash that seemed to split the roof. As it died away a singular sound came creeping into the room from some quarter near at hand.

"Hark!" said Vera.

It was a singular thread of song rising abruptly and with piercing sweetness over the last rumbling of the tempest—a woman's voice singing a lullaby to the accompaniment of some stringed instrument, and with such a *mother* tone in it that Vera instinctively listened for the movement of a child:

"Rest, my little one, rest,
Close to my warm, white breast.
Like a silver boat on the sky afloat,
The moon sinks down the west;
Out on the sands the small waves swell,
The gray owl hoots in the ferny dell.
Rest, my baby, for all is well!"

Vera started and looked around. "Who is that?"

Her husband's face had put on a strange pallor. Peg Patton leaned and threw a piece of driftwood on the fire. Neither answered, and immediately the mysterious voice rose again, but this time tragic and passionate, muffled somewhat by an intervening partition, yet near and distinct:

"Come from the dead, O my lover, my lover!
I call thee in vain!
Come from thy island grave—over me hover
The vultures of pain.
Visions of terror and torment affright me,
Return thou to me!
Gilead hath never a balm to delight me,
Parted from thee.
Haste! for the breath of my life is a sigh, love,
Haste from the dead!
In thy remembered death, daily I die, love——"

A string snapped—silence succeeded. Vera turned to Peg Patton.

"It seems," she said, dryly, "that you have something here besides the owls and the sea to amuse you, after all!"

Peg's dark face remained perfectly passive.

"The person you heard just now, madam, is a poor demented creature who lives with me—a very unfortunate creature. You'd be sorry for her, I'm sure, if you knew her story."

"Pray where do you keep her?" asked Vera, in a sprightly voice; "up the chimney, or under the floor?"

"In neither place, madam, but she is afraid of strangers, and I do not show her to any one—not even to the wife of my master."

Hawkstone interposed quickly:

"My wife has no desire to intrude on your private affairs, Peggy. The storm is now passing—we need not trouble you longer. Accept this trifle for your hospitality;" and he flung a handful of money upon the table.

Vera arose, with a wicked little smile.

"I shall not soon forget this visit, my good woman," she said, "and I will surely come again. There is nothing I love so much as a mystery, and it is plain that you harbor one in your Inlet house."

The next moment they were in the saddle, dashing down the forest path together.

If Vera's curiosity was unsatisfied, she asked no questions of her young husband, and he volunteered no explanations. In silence the two returned to Tempest Hall.

An extended acquaintance with the island did not render it any more attractive to Mrs. Hawkstone. Daily there were scenes that made the servants stare. The young wife was an incarnate firebrand; her lordly mate possessed a haughty, inflexible temper, so domestic life at the Hall soon became scandalous.

She was in the saddle half her time, dashing across the downs and over the white beaches—a vision of beauty

that made the islanders gaze, open-mouthed. No groom could keep pace with her. She often left Hawkstone himself far behind. She rode recklessly, magnificently, up steep hillsides, through tangled woods, leaping brawling watercourses and five-barred gates.

This seemed to be the only solace that she found on the island. At first the young husband looked on with cold indifference, but after a while he began to expostulate.

"Vera," he said to her at dinner, one day, "is it not time for you to turn your attention to some other matter than Ali? Your own education, for instance."

"My education!" she echoed, scornfully. "Did you not teach me to read and write two years ago? And since that time have I not waded through countless books to please you. Tedious work it was, too! Can I not even execute your national anthem, 'Yankee Doodle,' on the piano and violin?"—with a derisive little laugh. "Pray, why should I wish for any more accomplishments?"

"Because you are my wife," he answered, gravely, "and it is necessary that you should fit yourself for your new position in life. I know of no better opportunity than the present, while we are living so quietly here. It will be an easy matter to call the best tutors to our aid, and you will soon master all that it is desirable for you to learn. You must see that it is no easy task to fill the late Mrs. Hawkstone's place acceptably. You need particular preparation for it."

Her fair face hardened in an unpleasant way.

"I see," she said, sharply, "you are ashamed of me, Basil. You dare not present me to your friends, and so you keep me shut up on this island. It's a pity"—with a sneer—"that you did not think to send me away to school with Jetta Ravenel. I am your wife, the mother of your child. It is rather late to consign me to tutors, is it not? Your teaching was quite enough for me, I think. In fact, Basil"—stamping her small foot violently—"I decline to be educated to suit your friends, I decline to be made over after the pattern of your step-

mother! I will have no tutors, no study. I will be myself, and no other person, now and always."

"Pray be reasonable, Vera! I spoke for your own good, your own happiness. Cannot you see?"

She sprang from her chair, seized the thing nearest to her hand—a carafe of ice-water—and hurled it at him across the table.

"I am myself; I shall always remain myself!" she cried, and swept out of the room, and up the stair to her own chamber.

The young husband did not follow her. All this day and the next she remained alone, in a fit of obdurate sulks.

"*Mon Dieu!*" sighed her French maid Celende; "men are but brutes! Monsieur should come to make peace with madame on his two knees!"

"I love him," hissed Vera, through her little white teeth, "and I hate him! Did you ever hear a paradox like that, Celende?"

"Yes, madame," answered Celende, pensively; "it is common enough."

But monsieur did not come. He was tearing about his island domain on all sorts of errands, evidently forgetful of the panting, pining young creature with whom he had quarreled. A nature like Vera's could not long endure this state of things. The third day arrived and brought a crisis.

Basil Hawkstone was sitting in his library, looking over accounts with the overseer, when a wild outcry suddenly arose and filled the house. He dashed out into the hall, and up the stair to the landing above. Here a cloud of dense smoke met him, rolling out from his wife's chamber. He leaped into the room. The window-curtains, the draperies of the huge carved bed, were all ablaze—everything in the chamber seemed shriveling in a sheet of fire. And there, in the midst of the choking smoke and the uncanny red glare, stood Vera, smiling, triumphant, her blue eyes bright with malice and mockery!

"So you have come to me at last, sir!" she said.

He began to tear down the blazing draperies, shouting to the terrified servants to supplement his efforts with water. In five minutes the carpet was strewn with *débris*, the fire was out, and Hawkstone confronted his wife with brows drawn ominously down over his angry eyes.

"Did you set fire to the room to bring me here?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered; "why not? The end justifies the means."

"I hope you are satisfied, madame," said Hawkstone, in a tone that would have frightened another woman.

Her vicious little laugh rang out like silver bells.

"Not yet!" she answered. "I warn you, Basil—if you persist in keeping me on the island, I will burn this old rookery over your head!"

He looked first at the ruin she had made, and then at the slight, girlish figure standing erect, with white bosom heaving, and blue eyes flashing.

"You have marked out a pleasant programme," he said, dryly. "Are we to live henceforth in open warfare, Vera? We are young, remember, a mere boy and girl in years—we have probably a long life before us."

A great sigh parted her lips. In a moment she had ceased to be a little demon, and was a lovely wet-eyed angel.

"No, I do not want to live in open warfare with you, Basil," she sobbed. "You loved me when we left Paris, but the air of this dreadful island has changed you—made you cold, unkind, grim as Bluebeard——"

Before the last words were out he opened his arms. With a cry, she sprang into them. They kissed each other like lovers. The reconciliation seemed complete. Hawkstone went back to his overseer; the servants came in to remove the *débris* and restore order.

As for Vera, she stole away to another chamber, donned her blue habit, mounted Ali, and unseen and unattended, started off for a gallop across the island.

Down the long slopes went Ali, and over the gray shore toward Peg's Inlet. The incoming tide was frothing and racing under the low, dwindling light of the fad-

ing day. Not a living thing was in sight—even the noisy fish-hawks had vanished. Far away, on the purple ocean spaces, glimmered a flitting sail, spectre-like, unreal, but that was all. Softly Ali's hoofs fell on the wet sands. The salt wind blew out the girl's hair, and twisted the folds of her blue habit. How silent, how lonely looked the dunes in that waning light!

Suddenly, from the salt, coarse grass which fringed them, a man arose, and stepped forward to meet Basil Hawkstone's wife.

He was of low stature, thickset, and not bad-looking, yet with something about him that suggested the stable rather than the drawing-room. Not a high-bred person, by any means—there was too much color in his necktie, and a superfluity of stripes in his pantaloons. Nevertheless, he went straight up to Vera Hawkstone, and seized Ali's bridle with the freedom of an old acquaintance.

"By my soul, Zephyr," he cried, "it's good to see you again, my dear!"

She sat in her saddle for a moment, as though turning to stone; then she gave a wild, glad, astonished cry.

"Oh, Jasper!" she answered; "oh, Jasper Hatton! can it be you, and *here!*"

He laughed.

"It's me, fast enough. I was told, over at Whithaven, that strangers are not received on your island, and that if I ventured too close to Tempest Hall—as you call it—the servants would most likely set the dogs upon me. So I've been wandering around, like a babe in the woods, waiting to catch, somehow, a chance glimpse of you. This seems to be a fairish sort of beast!" patting Ali's neck approvingly.

Her slight figure was palpitating with excitement. She grew red and white by turns.

"I am so glad to see you, Jasper!" she gasped, with her hand on his broad shoulder; "I think I was never, never so glad as this in all my life before!"

He looked at her critically. He had narrow eyes, as black as a coal, with lurking gleams in the corners.

"Greatly obliged for your welcome, little Zephyr!

You are as pretty as ever, I see. When you appeared yonder, I said to myself, 'That's my little lady! There's not another woman on earth who can ride like that!' And now, how do you get on with your American nabob? Are you happy here? Any hankering after old times, eh? You might"—with a low laugh—"have been *my* wife, you know, instead of his! Is it private life, or public, that suits you best, my beauty?"

In her agitation she did not seem to hear his questions.

"I am so glad—so glad!" she kept repeating. "I never thought to see you again. What brought you to this dreadful island, Jasper Hatton?"

"Business of importance," he answered, with a grim smile. "What *can* you mean?"

"Little Zephyr," said Jasper Hatton, looking her boldly in the eyes, "I have come for you—for *you!*"

CHAPTER XI.

THE CATASTROPHE.

"Basil, I have a favor to ask of you this morning," purred Vera Hawkstone.

She was leaning over her husband's table in the old library, the loose sleeves of her violet silk gown falling away from her dimpled white arms, a feverish light in her lovely eyes.

"Ask on!" answered Hawkstone.

"I want a thousand dollars, Basil."

He drew out his checkbook, wrote the necessary words, and passed the paper to her across the table.

"Are you not going to inquire what I mean to do with it?" she laughed.

"All that I have is yours," he answered, simply. "I do not care in the least how you spend the money, Vera."

Hawkstone was most generous with his wife. Ever since their marriage-day she had squandered his substance recklessly, and he had never uttered protest or complaint.

"It is now my turn to ask a favor, Vera," he said,

gravely. "You have not been yourself for the last few days. Something is troubling you. Tell me, what is it? Have you been disturbed in any way? Has anything unpleasant happened?"

A red spot leaped into her cheek.

"No, no; certainly not, Basil. How absurd of you to imagine such things!"

"But I insist that you are strangely upset of late! Surely you are overdoing this riding business, Vera. I wish you would leave Ali in his stall. Then, too, you go out at all hours unattended. I do not like that. A groom should be with you always. The island has swamps and morasses, in which a stranger might easily come to grief."

She gave a short laugh. "I do not need an attendant. I am too thoroughly at home in the saddle for that. Ah, here comes the child for her morning visit."

A nursemaid entered, bearing the little heiress of Hawkstone. Vera received her daughter in an absent way, responded absently to the pressure of the wee baby arms. Where were her thoughts at that moment? Not with husband or child, surely! For some moments Hawkstone, leaning on the table, gazed in silent admiration at the fair young mother clasping her little one—that typical picture which has delighted the world for centuries—then, prompted by some evil spirit, he began, in a tender, coaxing voice:

"Supplement your beauty, Vera, with such accomplishments as the girl of the period is expected to possess, and you will carry the fashionable world by storm. Let me urge you, for my sake, for little Bee's sake, to consent to be improved, dear! You hate seclusion. Well, then, fit yourself for the society into which you long to enter."

Nothing could have been more unfortunate than these words. Her blue eyes flashed.

"Still harping on that subject, Basil? Did I not say that you were ashamed to present me to your friends?—that you keep me prisoned here because you are afraid of their censure?"

He colored.

"As my wife, you are sure to be criticised, of course. Ashamed of you I am not, but I want to arm you *cap-à-pie* before you are called to face the critics. Cannot you see that love alone prompts me to do this?"

Her face whitened.

"I am done with love," she hissed; "I am done with *you*—with everything here!" and she flung the child suddenly, violently, from her.

Hawkstone sprang, but too late. With a shriek of pain and terror, little Bee struck against the carved back of a great antique chair, and then fell to the floor, where she lay stunned and motionless. Hawkstone snatched up the limp little body.

"Vera, you have killed her!" he cried, in horror.

"I don't care—I don't care! I am no longer accountable for anything that happens here!" she answered, recklessly.

The servants came rushing to the scene. Mrs. Hawkstone was carried to her room in violent hysterics, and a messenger dispatched to the mainland for a doctor. The man of medicine came, examined little Bee, and grew very grave.

"I fear," he said to Hawkstone, "that your child has sustained some injury of the spine—in fact, she may be permanently crippled by this unfortunate accident."

Hawkstone staggered back against the wall. Directly he left the nursery where the child lay moaning in the arms of her nurse, and crossed the corridor to his wife's chamber. Celende, the French maid, opened the door to his knock.

"*Mon Dieu!*" she cried; "madame is too ill to see monsieur. Her heart is broken. The little one leaped and madame could not hold her—that is the truth of the matter. *Ciel!* monsieur cannot believe his wife would hurt her own child, eh? If mademoiselle becomes a cripple it will kill madame. A bad back is beyond remedy. No, monsieur, you cannot enter—madame forbids—she is too ill!"

And the door was shut in his face

In a towering passion he went down-stairs. The mail had just arrived from the mainland. Among its contents was a letter from Vincent Hawkstone, and a formidable array of unpaid bills.

"You promised to cancel them, you know, Prince Lucifer"—wrote the young scapegrace—"and it's but fair that you should do so, for you are rich, and I poor. Of course, all fellows in college are guilty of some pranks.

> "'Young blood must have its course, lad,
> And every dog his day.'

"You had your day, you know, so be so good as to settle these little accounts, and send me something generous besides—it is hard to maintain the dignity of a Hawkstone on a purse as thin as mine."

Hawstone's face darkened.

"The impudent scamp!" he muttered; and, seizing a pen, he wrote, curtly: "I have doubled your allowance, Vincent; henceforth keep out of debt!"

Some business matters with the overseer compelled Basil Hawkstone to remain abroad on the island till night fell; at that time he parted with Harris and started home, afoot and alone, over the beach.

The moon was rising above the dreary sand-dunes and the low cliffs. The little waves curled softly up the shingle. In the curve of the shore—a lonely, unfrequented spot—Hawkstone suddenly heard the murmur of voices. He moved forward a few paces, and saw two figures standing together in the moonlight—a man and a woman.

He stopped—stared. Yes, it was his wife, disguised in a long wrap, with a hood drawn over her fair head, talking earnestly to a stranger—there, and at that hour!

"You really must not come here again," he heard her say. "My husband is absolute ruler of the island—it is impossible to bribe any of his people. You will surely be discovered."

The man gave a low, vexed laugh.

"I shall come, Zephyr, until I bring you to your

senses. It's plain that you live a cat and dog's life with your young nabob. You wasn't made to be shut up in a place like this—your heart isn't here, my beauty—it's with *me*."

Hawkstone waited for nothing more. The next moment he was standing face to face with the pair, his hand twisted in the stranger's collar.

"Since you openly claim my wife's heart, sir, please do me the favor to tell me who and what you are!" he thundered.

Vera gave a shrill scream, and the hood fell back from her fair face.

"Basil! don't you remember Jasper Hatton, of Hatton's 'Royal'? You saw him in London at the time you married me. Surely you might speak civilly to my friends!"

Hawkstone's hand fell from the other's windpipe.

"I may have met Mr. Hatton before," he answered, dryly; "I do not clearly remember. Perhaps he will tell me what it is that brings him to Tempest Island, and why he chooses this time and place for an interview with my wife."

Mr. Hatton had showed unmistakable signs of perturbation, but now he rallied smartly.

"It's a professional matter that brings me to America," he answered, "and being here, I couldn't resist hunting up Zephyr—beg pardon—Mrs. Hawkstone. It wasn't in human nature for me to forget her. She can tell you whether or not I was her friend, years before she ever saw *your* face. Well, just now we met by chance on the beach, and naturally fell to talking of old times."

Hawkstone knew that he was lying. He cast a contemptuous look over his swarthy face and short, stout figure.

"It is impossible for Mrs. Hawkstone to renew her former acquaintance with you, or any other person in your line of business. You are a thing of the past, Mr. Hatton. She can never, under any circumstances, know you again!"

Jasper Hatton shrugged his shoulders.

"You're rather hard on your wife's old friends, sir. I wanted to see with my own eyes that you had made her happy—as happy as she used to be with us. I find you haven't! She's deep in the doldrums here on your infernal island. It would have been a thousand times better for her if she had staid with me. I tell you, there was never but one Zephyr for us at the 'Royal.' We all adored her—we adore her still, let who will forbid!"

A sudden bitter fury surged over the young husband. Here was a clown, a ringmaster, or something as objectionable, claiming an old intimacy with his wife, and stealing to his ancestral domain for secret interviews with her!

"It is said that an Englishman's house is his castle," he cried. "This island is mine, and for you to intrude here is simply unwarrantable impudence! Be off, fellow, and, on your peril, never attempt to set foot again on my territory!"

In his magnificent young strength he looked fully capable of enforcing his own decrees.

Jasper Hatton prudently retreated before him.

"'Pon my soul," he sneered, "you've nothing to boast of in the way of hospitality! You think you've added to little Zephyr's value by marrying her, eh? She is now of more account than when she was just the star of the ring—the neatest rider that ever went through a paper balloon. Faugh! Well, I'll go, and no thanks to you, my nabob."

A boat was beached a few yards away. He started toward it with a jubilant rather than crestfallen air.

"The best of friends must part," he said; "but, as it sometimes happens, they meet again. Good-night, Mrs. Hawkstone, and remember the star of the ring oughtn't to be put out like a penny rushlight!"

He pushed the boat out into the water. Hawkstone turned to his wife.

"Come home, Vera," he said, sternly.

Without a word she walked away with him. Immediately his pent-up wrath broke forth.

"You were too ill to see me," he stormed, "but, as it

appears, quite able to leave the child you have injured so cruelly, and come here to a tryst with that ruffian! You, my wife, condescend to meet a low jockey, groom, or whatever he may be, alone on the shore, to talk of a time in your life that had far better be forgotten. Vera, I forbid you to ever see or speak to the fellow again."

She looked up and laughed in his face.

"Surely the child does not need me, Basil—you have hirelings enough to watch her. When will you learn, you absurd boy, that I must and shall do exactly as I like—that you really have no more authority over me than over that sea yonder?"

He took this defiance with ill grace.

"Have I no authority over you? Do you defy me to my face? Then, let me tell you, Vera, you and I have no longer a chance of happiness together."

She laughed wildly.

"How you take one to task, Basil! Are you jealous of Jasper Hatton?—ha! ha! He came here for what purpose, do you think? To ask me to return to Hatton's 'Royal,' and name my own figures. I have been missed, it seems—the public has not yet forgotten me. Basil Hawkstone"—pausing in the path, and drawing her breath curiously—"*I have a half-mind to go!*"

He looked at her in her blazing white beauty with horror and amaze.

"You understand your own capabilities," he answered bitterly; "as a circus-rider you were a success—as a wife and mother you are a failure! God knows you have led me a life of it since the day I married you. You fancied you cared for me, Vera—on the contrary, you loved nothing but that cursed, that disgusting business. Bah! from my soul I am sick of this sort of thing! If you go with Jasper Hatton—if you return to the ring, I am for ever done with you!" There was a moment of tragic silence; then she dashed back her wind-blown hair.

"So you force me to choose betwixt you and my art, Basil; and should the choice displease you, you would divorce me, probably, after the fashion of your father!—I know something of the family history, you see. Well,

my *liege*"—mockingly—"I will think the matter over, and let you know my decision, before your suspense becomes too great for you!"

She darted on before him up the beach. He did not attempt to overtake her. Once she turned and looked back, her gold hair rippling, her small, girlish figure outlined against the dusk. She waved one white hand, and the next moment was gone.

Hawkstone went home in an unenviable frame of mind. The very air seemed charged with calamity. Little Bee still moaned in the nursery, watched by the servants. Without making any attempt to see his wife again, the island lord retired to his chamber at a late hour and slept ill. When he descended to the breakfast-room next morning, Mrs. Otway, the housekeeper, met him with an anxious face.

"Your wife left the house at daybreak, sir, and has not yet returned," she said.

"She has gone on one of her mad gallops, doubtless," he answered, then snatched up his hat, and hurried to the stables. Yes, Ali's stall was empty. He called to his groom: "Did I not tell you, Jim, to follow Mrs. Hawkstone when she went out at unseasonable hours?"

"You did, sir," stammered the man; "but this morning she stole in here and led Ali out herself. I was asleep in the loft, and never heard a sound, sir. Lord only knows what time it was!"

"Throw the saddle on Rupert!" thundered Hawkstone, "and follow me!"

The groom obeyed. Master and man set forth together.

Down beyond the dreary sand-dunes, down where the "Old Woman," in stony silence, stood guarding the entrance of Peg Patton's Inlet, Hawkstone heard the impatient stamp of a horse, and there, in the morning sunshine, he found Ali tied to a blasted tree, pawing the wet earth, and riderless.

Pinned to his saddle was a letter, reading thus:

"My choice is made. I go! You will teach little Bee to hate

and despise her mother. You will doubtless marry another wife more to your taste; but I shall take good care that you never quite forget me—and I will not forget *you*. VERA."

He stood on that lonely beach, "his household gods shattered around him," deserted, disgraced, the doom of his race falling on him darkly, and tore the letter to fragments, and tossed it into the sea.

"Go!" he muttered, with white lips. "Go! And God grant that I may never on this earth see your fair, false face again!"

CHAPTER XII.

JETTA RAVENEL SPEAKS.

July 1st.—School is done. The rush and worry, the fever and excitement of the last few weeks are all over. Five days have passed since the graduating exercises at Madame Moreau's seminary, and the girls are now gone. The silent, deserted class-rooms, the forsaken dormitories, fill me with loneliness. I only am left here—a homeless, solitary creature, whom madame insists upon keeping till, in the words of Mr. Micawber, something shall turn up. Luckily, I have always been a favorite at madame's school, both with pupils and teachers. Invitations to spend the Summer in country houses, at mountain resorts and by the sea, have been freely extended to me by my classmates; but, alas! these pleasures are not for me. I am determined to face the situation bravely—to accept no more bounty, however delicately tendered. Jetta Ravenel, you have now completed your eighteenth year. Through the generosity of your late friend, Mrs. Hawkstone, you have acquired what is called a thorough education. It now remains for you to turn it to practical account.

This morning I "burned my ships behind me"; that is to say, I wrote to Basil Hawkstone's lawyer, who has promptly paid all my bills for the last six years, and declined any further assistance from my so-called guardian. After posting this letter I sat down in the empty music-room to ponder the situation.

It was a sultry, breathless morning; the sun beat pitilessly on the city roofs. After the hurry and bustle of the last few weeks the silence and solitude of the school seemed insupportable. Presently madame herself entered, with the morning papers in her hand.

"How lonely you look, my dear child," she said, in her kindly way. "I see. Life besets you already with stern problems. It is a pity that a girl like you should be forced to earn her own livelihood. Did that good Mrs. Hawkstone provide you with means for an education and nothing more, my dear—nothing more?"

"Yes," I answered, dryly; "with my husband, too; but, luckily, he was already married when her choice fell upon him. I have declined further assistance from the Hawkstones, madame. Work I must find, and at once, for, whatever happens, I am determined to accept no more aid from that, or any other quarter."

She looked grave.

"My dear, your independent spirit does you credit. Do you know anything about those Hawkstones? They seem to have neglected you strangely—yes, quite forgotten you, since you came to the school."

"I know nothing of any of them," I replied, indifferently; "my bills, as you are aware, have all been settled by the family lawyer. I have not heard a syllable from any person on the island since I left it. To tell the truth, I remember the place only with aversion."

Madame shrugged her shoulders.

"It is sad to see a person so young and attractive left quite alone in the world," she sighed. "My dear, let us look over the columns of wants in these papers—we may find the promise of something here."

We did so. Half-way down the printed page, my eyes fell upon this advertisement:

"WANTED.—A governess for a little girl of six years. Salary liberal. Unexceptionable references required. Address Mrs. O., Windsor Hotel, stating where an interview may be had."

I read the above aloud to madame.

"Do you think I might do?" I asked.

"Certainly," she answered, briskly; "we can furnish the unexceptionable references. 'Salary liberal'—that sounds well. My dear Jetta, I advise you to write to Mrs. O. at once."

I wrote immediately, stating name, age and qualifications. Then I prepared to possess my soul in patience till an answer should arrive from Mrs. O. My purse is empty, but I am resolved to accept no more money from the Hawkstones. I retain but one pleasant memory of Tempest Island, and that is—Mrs. Hawkstone herself, my father's friend—*my* friend. I have always counted her death as the greatest misfortune of my life.

July 2d.—A little before lunch-time I was called down to the reception-room to meet Mrs. O.

She was a small, quiet-looking person, dressed in black silk. She had a placid face, deeply wrinkled, and iron-gray hair arranged in smooth bands. I was startled by something strangely familiar in her appearance. As I entered, she arose with the air of a lady.

"Miss Ravenel!" she said, "yes, it is you—changed, of course, but recognizable. Do you remember me?"

After vain attempts to fix her in my memory, I was forced to answer "No."

"I am Mrs Otway," she said, with a smile; "the housekeeper at Tempest Hall—you knew me well about six years ago."

I felt as though I had received a cold *douche*.

"And are you the person who advertised for a governess?" I asked.

"Certainly," she answered; "I am here in New York for the express purpose of securing one for little Beatrice Hawkstone. Of course, you are aware of the troubles we have had at the island since you went away?"

"On the contrary," I replied, trying to repress a smile, "I have heard nothing concerning the island, or anybody upon it, from that date to the present. My so-called guardian has never troubled himself about me in any way. I trust"—and I tried to speak politely—"that Mr. Hawkstone and his family are well."

"My dear," cried Mrs. Otway, in a shocked voice, "is

it possible you do not know that Basil Hawkstone has no family now, save poor little Bee? Six years ago his wife fled from him, and later, the courts gave him a decree of absolute divorce and the custody of the child. My dear, the affair made great scandal. All the newspapers were full of it at the time."

"I did not happen to see it," I answered, feeling quite stunned. "Madame never allows her pupils to read scandals of any kind."

"Quite right. Since the divorce Basil Hawkstone has been wandering abroad—in Egypt, in the Soudan, in Asia Minor, in the uttermost parts of the earth. He will probably never return to his own land. His little daughter is in my charge at Tempest Island. It is now time for her to have a competent teacher. She has scarcely learned her alphabet as yet, poor child!"

"And Basil Hawkstone is divorced," I echoed, blankly, "from that pretty young creature whom he seemed to adore?"

"Oh, my dear, she ran away from him, and went back to the circus-ring from which he had taken her. The first that he heard she was in Cuba, carrying everything by storm with her riding. His life was wrecked—desolated, of course. It was dreadful. I cannot speak of it. And now, Miss Ravenel, will you come down to Tempest Island as governess to our motherless little Bee? You wish to teach, from which fact I infer that you no longer consider yourself the ward of Basil Hawkstone."

I nodded coldly.

"Well, we should greatly rejoice to have you at the island, my dear, instead of some stranger, to whom the affairs of the family are unknown."

"Give me time to think," I gasped. "I have a strong antipathy to the island. I had not wished to see it again."

"That is not strange," said Mrs. Otway, kindly, "for some unpleasant things happened to you there. But remember, all is now changed, and I am at the head of domestic affairs at Tempest Hall. I will give you till

to-morrow to think of the matter, and then call for your decision."

She mentioned a salary far above my expectations, and departed. I flew to Madame Moreau.

"I am young," I said, mournfully, "and youth is not desirable in a governess. I am totally without experience, I am penniless, and, but for you, friendless. Can I—dare I reject Mrs. Otway's offer?"

"You cannot, you must not!" answered madame, with decision. "The remuneration is excellent; and then, you are going among people that you already know, and with whom you are likely to find a good home and many privileges."

I meditated a little, then answered:

"Very well, madame, I will do as you advise; but something tells me I ought never to trust myself on the Tempest again."

"Nonsense!" said madame, lightly. "You are out of spirits. Do not let an idle fancy rob you of your good fortune. What harm can overtake you at Tempest Island? This kind, motherly Mrs. Otway — you can have no antipathy to *her*, surely?"

"No - oh, no!" I answered. "I cannot explain my forebodings, madame, nevertheless they are real. But I shall go. I shall accept Mrs. Otway's offer. I cannot afford to do otherwise. Heaven only knows when I may have another! I will begin to pack my trunks at once."

"You have decided wisely," said madame, as she gave me a kiss of approval, "and should you be homesick or unhappy, Jetta, you are always free to return to *me*."

July 3d.—I was summoned again to the reception-room—this time to meet a gentleman, who had called to see Miss Ravenel.

He was standing at a window as I entered, his back toward me. I beheld a graceful figure, not powerful, but exceedingly well proportioned, and a handsome young head, shining with close curls of black hair. My heart gave a great bound.

"Gabriel!" I cried out; "oh, can be you, Gabriel?"

He turned and caught me in his arms. Yes, it was my stepbrother—the only relative left me—my father's namesake, Gabriel Ravenel. He held my face in his two hands and scrutinized it with keen interest.

"Good Heaven! Jetta, what a beauty you have become!" he cried. "It was always said that we were very like—I think we are!" with a vain little laugh. "You know I have not seen you since Mrs. Hawkstone carried you off, six years or more ago. Of course, I was prepared to find you grown to womanhood, but I must say your good looks amaze me. Let me see—you are now eighteen, and I have reached the mature age of twenty-two—we can no longer be called boy and girl, I suppose."

I clung around his neck in a transport of joy.

"What brings you to New York, Gabriel?" I asked, laughing and crying together. "The last I knew, you were studying law in New Orleans, and your letters never intimated that you meant to visit me. What a delightful surprise is this! Oh, my darling, tell me all about it! Have you come to stay?"

He was still absorbed in my looks.

"Allowing for the difference in sex," he said, airily, "we are certainly as similar as two peas, Jetta! Yes, I have come to stay. Sit down with me, and let me tell you about it."

I noticed that he was faultlessly dressed, and that his manner was full of suppressed excitement. A deep glow filled his splendid Southern eyes—he had the bearing of a young prince. Gabriel is my idol—the only thing left in the wide world for me to love.

"My dear Jetta," he continued, "a month ago I *was* in New Orleans, deep in law—by-the-way, I thoroughly detest law, and all other professions—when an odd thing befell me. I received a letter from a gentleman named Sutton, inviting me to New York, to become his private secretary, and, should he find me a satisfactory person, his heir, also. Our father, you know, was twice married. Sutton, though a stranger to me—I give you my word, I had never before heard of such a being—proved to be

some cousin of my mother, who died in my infancy. He claimed me as his only living relative—hence his amazing offer. Of course, I flung my law-books to the dogs and hurried to New York. It seems that the old fellow had meant to leave his fortune to public institutions; but recently a new whim seized him—at best, he is but a bundle of whims—so he burned his will, and hunted me up, determined to bestow his millions on his own kindred, of whom, luckily, I alone remain. Now, my dear, you see me no longer poor, proud, penniless, with my own way to make in the world. I have fallen into the tallest kind of clover—I am the prospective heir of a millionaire, and I find myself quite bewildered with this sudden change of prospects."

His pale Greek face, with its jetty curls and dreamy Southern eyes, reddened with excitement as he told his story. Betwixt joy and amazement, I could only gasp:

"Oh, Gabriel, how delightful! I am glad it was your mother, not mine, who was a Sutton; glad that to you, not me, this wonderful fortune falls! And you have come to live permanently with your kinsman? You are with him *now?* Is he nice? Are you happy? Gabriel, tell me everything."

"I have been at old Sutton's Fifth Avenue palace for a week," he began.

I felt a sudden chill.

"A whole week, Gabriel, and you did not let me know?"

"My dear Jetta, don't be exacting—that glaring fault of girls in general. To tell the truth, old Sutton and his plans for my future have absorbed me so that I quite forgot you. You see, he has already selected an heiress for me to marry—a ward of his own. Verily, I *am* having a streak of amazing luck! Oh, yes, he's well enough. All his friends greet him with one question, 'How's your liver?' He's a hypochondriac, and his hopes and fears centre principally on his digestion. Of course, I'll have to accept the heiress to please *him.*"

I did not quite like Gabriel's tone and manner.

"Do you love her?" I asked, gravely.

"My unsophisticated child, I'm not required to love her. It's enough for me to bestow upon her my honorable name and princely person," giving his mustache an airy twist. "She's deuced far gone on me already—quite a striking girl, too—blonde—looks a fellow square in the eye—courage enough for a Choctaw squaw. A man does not care to commit himself too soon, however. My career of conquest is but just begun."

"I do not like to hear you jest like this, Gabriel."

"Jest? 'Pon my soul, I'm in dead earnest! Now, what have you to tell me about yourself, Jetta? Still enjoying Mrs. Hawkstone's bounty at this fashionable seminary? Of course I haven't worried about you in these last five or six years, knowing that you were in the care of the Hawkstones. Besides, I have had all that I could do, like many another Southern gentleman, to keep my own head above water."

"I do not doubt that," I answered, sadly. "There was nothing for either of us when poor papa died. You find me still at this seminary, Gabriel, because I have no other abiding-place; but my education is now finished, and I am done with the Hawkstone bounty. To be frank with you, dear, I am going out governessing—going to earn my own living." And then I told him of Mrs. Otway's offer, and my determination to accept it. He continued to twirl his long mustache.

"You seem to be inextricably mixed up with these Hawkstones, Jetta," he grumbled. "Evidently you cannot escape them. So they've educated you to be the teacher of their own brat, eh? I don't half like it, remembering that matter of our father and Philip Hawkstone. Of course, you know what I mean?"

"No," I answered.

"Well, you were so young at the time Mrs. Hawkstone carried you away, nobody thought it wise to tell you, I suppose. Deuced disagreeable affair, anyway. My father and yours, one of the ancient Louisiana Ravenels, was actually suspected—yes, accused—of killing Philip Hawkstone. I've understood there was a good deal of circumstantial evidence against him, but the

charge could not be proved. He lay in jail for I know not how long, with the odium of the murder upon him. He told me something about it before he died. Mrs. Hawkstone was an old flame of his, you know; that's why he left you to her care. I've a prejudice against the whole Hawkstone race, because of the treatment which my father received at their hands a quarter of a century ago."

He gave me such details of the old affair as he remembered.

"Enough!" I said. "I will return to my first resolution, Gabriel, and never go near the island again. Now that you are here in New York, with such brilliant prospects, such high expectations, I cannot feel anxious or needy any more."

He looked alarmed.

"Nonsense, Jetta! I am not in a position to do anything for you, as yet. You'd better go down to the island—let bygones be bygones; after all, it's a comfortable sort of salary they offer you. Yes, go by all means. By-and-by, when Old Hypochondriac dies, and I take possession of his millions, I'll allow you something handsome; but for the present——"

"I must look out for myself," I finished, meekly; "I am quite willing to do so, Gabriel—I have youth and health—not for worlds would I be a burden upon you."

I saw only too plainly that he did not mean to be troubled with me or my affairs.

"Quite right, Jetta," he answered, rising briskly. "Well, old Hypo is going to his Newport villa to-day, and I, of course, must attend him. You can write to me, if things go wrong, you know."

And the next moment he had kissed me hastily and pranced out, leaving me pained, miserable and uncertain whether to weep or rejoice over this very unexpected visit.

Shortly after, a servant ushered in Mrs. Otway, placid, motherly, expectant.

"Have you decided, my dear?" she asked.

"Yes," I answered, with a smothered sigh, "I accept

your other, Mrs. Otway—I will go with you to Tempest Island."

CHAPTER XIII.

JETTA STILL SPEAKS.

In the waning afternoon the New York express puffed into the depot at Whithaven, and Mrs. Otway and I gathered up our wraps and bundles, and descended from the train to meet a grizzled old man who stood waiting for us on the platform, and whom I recognized as Sampson, the skipper of the yacht that comes and goes betwixt Whithaven and Tempest Island.

"By the great horn spoon!" he cried at sight of me, "here's the little Southern gal! Yes, I know you, miss—couldn't forget *that* pair of eyes in a hurry! Going down to the island with us?"

Mrs. Otway answered for me.

"Yes, Sampson, she has consented to become Miss Bee's governess. You must look out for our luggage. Better throw this shawl about your shoulders, Miss Ravenel—these sea-winds will chill you to the marrow, even in July."

Sampson took charge of the baggage, and we went aboard the yacht. The stuffy little hole called a cabin had no attractions either for Mrs. Otway or myself; so, wrapped in shawls, we sat down on deck and watched the spires and chimneys of Whithaven recede, as we went plunging out into the great gray sea.

Old memories rushed upon me of this same journey, made as a child with Mrs. Hawkstone—of the unpleasant things which had happened to me at the Tempest; then I thought of Gabriel, and sadly reflected that he had not interposed a finger to save me from returning to the spot that I so much disliked. I heaved an involuntary sigh.

"My dear," said Mrs. Otway, kindly, "I hope you are not homesick already."

I tried to smile, as I drew my wraps closer about me. The wind was chilly and salt, and the yacht flew before it like a bird. I felt the spray on my face.

"Can one be very homesick who has no home?" I

answered. "Mrs. Otway, you have lived your whole life on the Tempest; will you tell me all that you know about the arrest of my father for the murder of Philip Hawkstone?"

A change passed over her quiet old face.

"Certainly, my dear," she answered, gravely, and sitting there under the straining canvas, with Tempest Island growing out of the pale, salty distance before me, I, for the first time, heard the whole affair in detail.

"Mrs. Otway," I said, when she had finished her story, "did you believe my father guilty?"

"Yes — at the time," she answered, in a low voice; "but now—now I *know* he was innocent!"

Her tone carried conviction with it.

"Thank God that I hear you say that!" I cried, drawing a breath of relief.

A tear glistened on her wrinkled cheek.

"My dear," she said, gently, "never think of that dreadful matter again; never speak of it to any person on the island. It is a subject which we most carefully avoid."

The conversation ended, for the yacht was sweeping up to the landing-place. Harris, the overseer, met us there—an old man now, growing gray in the service of the Hawkstones. He looked dumfounded when he was presented to me.

"Heaven above! has *she* come back here — Gabriel Ravenel's daughter?" I heard him mutter.

We went up to the stone house. How well I remember the old sea-wall, where the peacocks scream, and the green slope of terraces, blazing now with lilies and carnations! A wood fire snapped in the ancient drawing-room. I wondered if it had been burning there ever since the morning I was sent away to school. I half expected to see that yellow-haired Vera Hawkstone frowning at me from one end of the tiled hearth; but in place of that the door opened, and a tiny figure, in a white frock and silk sash, came limping into the room—my pupil, Beatrice Hawkstone.

She was a puny child, slightly lame, and very small

for her seven years. She crept shyly up to me, and I dropped into a chair, and took her in my arms.

"Miss Bee," said Mrs. Otway, "this lady is your governess—Miss Ravenel. She has come to live at the island, and teach you many things. You must be very obedient and kind to her."

"I will; oh, yes, I will!" assented Bee, promptly, and then she added, in a doleful tone: "I'm glad you've come, Miss Ravenel. It's *very* lonesome here, and I'm lame, and can't run on the shore with the island children, and my papa has been gone a long while—so long. I'm sure he'll *never* come back."

"Oh, yes, he will!" I answered, with a view to raising her spirits. "He cannot be so hard-hearted as to leave you always lonely." And then I kissed her, and she returned the caress with interest. Plainly pupil and governess will be good friends.

I dined with Mrs. Otway and the child. The old housekeeper is very indulgent to her young charge. Little Bee enjoys her own sweet will to an alarming extent. When the meal was done a nursemaid carried the child away, and shortly after, I, fatigued with my journey, retired to the room that had been assigned me.

It was the Cedar Chamber, where Mrs. Hawkstone had breathed her last. Repairs were going on in the house, and it was necessary that I should accept this sleeping-place for the night.

"No one has occupied the room since Mrs. Hawkstone's death," said the housekeeper, who conducted me to the door. "If you feel at all timid or nervous, my dear, come and share *my* bed."

But I answered, smiling, "I am quite fearless, Mrs. Otway, and I have no nerves."

So she departed, and left me alone.

I put my night-lamp down upon the table. The four-posted bed, the polished oaken floor, the dark, rich paneling, were all familiar to me. From that west window I had first seen Basil Hawkstone hurrying to his dying mother. Outside, the night had grown eerie and wild. I could hear rain splashing on the roof of the

porch; the wind sighed round the gables; the roar of the surf came up from the beach below the old sea-wall. With my ears full of these sounds I fell asleep.

I dreamed of my dead father; then I awoke suddenly, with an unpleasant sense of something wrong in the room.

The lamp had gone out. A loud, vibrating clock near by was striking one. At the same moment I became aware that a window had been opened in the chamber—a current of wet air was rushing across me as I lay—also, that something stood by the four-posted bed—a motionless white shape, faintly outlined in the darkness. In spite of my boasted courage I felt my blood congealing; I could not move, I could not breathe. In this chamber of murder—this room tainted with the crime of five-and-twenty years before, I lay as if turning to stone.

Two or three dreadful moments passed. Then, with a tremendous effort, I started up.

"I know you!" I cried, wildly, with no actual comprehension of what I was saying. "You are Philip Hawkstone's ghost!"

How shall I describe the effect of these words? Instantly two hands, cold as clay, seized and hurled me down upon the bed. Something soft, cold, smothering, was pressed upon my face—I knew no more.

How long I lay insensible I cannot tell. It was the chilly sea-wind blowing through the open window that restored me at last. Fortunately the pillow had slipped away from my face. With a cry of terror I started up, groped for a match and lighted the night-lamp. The Cedar Chamber was empty, and my assailant, whether earthly or supernatural, was no longer there. I closed the window and dressed myself in haste.

A few brands still smoldered on the hearth—remnants of a fire that had been lighted early in the evening to burn away the damp of the unused room. I raked these together and sat down before them. There I remained for the rest of the night.

At an early hour next morning I descended to the breakfast-room. Mrs. Otway was there before me, arranging flowers in a Moorish jar.

"How pale you look, Miss Ravenel," she said, giving me a keen glance. "You have not slept well?"

"True," I replied; "if you do not mind, Mrs. Otway, I would like another room."

And in a few words I related the experience of the night. She dropped the flowers she was holding—her face grew pale and distressed.

"My dear!" she cried, in a dazed way—"oh, my dear? Are you sure it was not a dream? How dreadful! Well, don't think of it again. I will have you removed to another chamber immediately."

The door opened, and little Bee Hawkstone limped in, like a broken-winged butterfly, followed by a cross and sleepy maid.

"I couldn't keep her in bed," said the latter; "she was so bent, Miss Ravenel, on seeing you again. She didn't sleep half the night, chattering about you, and her pa that's over the seas."

The child clung around me with both small arms. The sole daughter of the house of Hawkstone is but a forlorn little thing, virtually without father, mother or kindred, and wholly given up to the care of servants.

"I want to look at you, Miss Ravenel," pleaded Bee, naïvely, "you are so pretty; and I want to stay close by you, you are so nice. You will never go away from the island, will you—never?"

"Never is a long day, dear," I answered, smiling. "I dare not make reckless promises; but be sure that I will stay here for the present, because I must, and"—moved by her little, pale, uplifted face—"because I wish to do you good, dear!"

We went out into the porch, filled with a troop of dogs, and down the garden-walk together. The clouds had passed with the night. A soft haze vailed the sky, token of coming heat. The peacocks were out on the terraces, the sails of the windmills hung motionless on the heights. Below the old sea-wall the Atlantic was heaving up its thin, curled edges of frothy breaker to the dazzling sun.

The terrors of the night slipped like a burden from

me. The wholesome light, the salt, fresh air, cleared my brain of phantoms, and made me strong and fearless again. Little Bee, looking wistfully off to sea, murmured:

"I wish papa would come!"

I soon found that this absent father was the centre of all the child's thoughts and desires.

We came to a spot marked by two ancient sundials, half buried in flaming nasturtiums, one bearing the motto, "*Tempus fugit ut umbra*," the other, "The Night Cometh!" They may have stood there in Rochambeau's day, when the French officers, in stars and orders and powdered hair, were entertained at Tempest Island. Near by, under a row of enormous pear-trees, a gate, in the form of a horseshoe, opened toward the stables. Here I sat down in a garden-chair with the child. The dogs had followed us from the porch—a curious train, led by an immense mastiff, with a muzzle as black as a coal, and ending with an absurd terrier, that would scarcely fill a lady's pocket. Bee began to introduce the canines to me individually.

"This is Bob—he'll bite you whenever he gets a chance. This is Corsair—he can stand on his hind legs and beg, but he growls just awful all the time. The nursemaid says he swears. Do you think dogs *can* swear, Miss Ravenel?"

She stopped, for something human, not canine, was swearing in a fearful way on the other side of the Horseshoe Gate. I heard two voices, one expostulating, the other threatening—both angry.

"Lord above! Mr. Vincent, you must be drunk or mad, sir, to ask me for money that's neither yours nor mine. I've been overseer of this island for many a year, and Mr. Basil has trusted me through thick and thin. I'll never give a dollar of his revenues to anybody without his full knowledge and consent, sir!"

"You old dunderhead!" the other voice shouted. "I must have the money, I say, and be back to Whithaven in an hour, and if you do not give it to me, I'll take the worth of it out of your ancient bones! Am I not a

Hawkstone also, and Prince Lucifer's heir? What does it matter whether I receive my own now, or ten, twenty, forty years hence, you fossil? I dare say you have what I need about you at this moment. Give it up or take the consequences!"

"I can't give up that which isn't mine, sir. You'll come to yourself, by-and-by, I hope. Better mend your ways and quit bad company; that's my advice to you."

Then came the sound of a fall, and a feeble cry, "Help!"

I sprang up from the garden-chair and dashed through the Horseshoe Gate into a graveled walk beyond. There I saw Harris, prostrate on the ground, his gray head in the dust. Over him stood a man, with one foot planted on his breast, savagely belaboring the old overseer with a horsewhip.

In a white heat of anger I flew to the assailant.

"Stop!" I cried, grasping the arm that was plying the whip. "Stop, you coward! How dare you strike an old man?"

He turned and looked at me. The whip fell from his hand; he withdrew his foot from Harris's breast. It was Vincent Hawkstone, his eyes bloodshotten from a night's debauch, his dress disordered, and with nothing of the gentleman left in his appearance. Bee had followed me through the gate. She raised a shrill cry at the pitiable plight of Harris.

"Oh, you wicked, wicked Vincent!" she said. "I will tell papa—I will, indeed! I wish you would never, never come to Tempest Island again!"

He did not seem to hear her—he stared only at me. I can never forget him as he stood there, with the red-gold hair tossed about his brows, his eyes blank and strange, his flushed, dissipated young face changing slowly to a gray, stony pallor.

I bent over Harris, and helped him to his unsteady old legs.

"Take my arm, Harris," I said, turning my back scornfully on Vincent Hawkstone, "and let me assist you to the house. You are hurt—you are faint."

"It's nothing, Miss Jetta—thank ye," faltered Harris—his loyalty to the house of Hawkstone would not let him complain, even then. "He don't know what he's doing—I'll be all right directly."

I wiped the blood from his face with my own handkerchief.

"If he does not know what he is doing, Harris," I answered, in my most withering tone, "he should be taught; as all brutes are taught—by that whip which he uses so freely on others!"

And still Vincent Hawkstone did not move or speak. I hurried Harris away.

"There has always been one wild Hawkstone in every generation," he muttered; "that boy Vincent grows madder and madder every day. Nothing can hold him. The Lord only knows what his end will be!"

Then he clapped his hat on his head and went off toward his own cottage.

"Why does Vincent always call himself papa's heir?" asked Bee, in an aggrieved tone; "how can he be that when *I* am here—I—papa's daughter?"

"It is very bad taste on his part, to say the least," I answered. "I hope he does not *live* on the island."

"No," said Bee, in a reassuring voice; "and he comes here only when he wants Harris to do things for him. He has a law-office at Whithaven. For my part, I wish he would *never* come!" added the ancient child.

Half an hour after, the breafast-bell rang. As I entered the wainscoted hall with Bee, lo! Vincent Hawkstone himself advanced to meet me, no longer flushed and disordered, but pale, mortified, penitent, his dress decently arranged, his whole appearance changed.

"I dare not ask you to shake hands with me, Miss Ravenel," he stammered; "I am heartily ashamed of myself—indeed I am! All that you said out there was quite true—I *am* a brute—a fiend, when I have taken too much wine. There was a club dinner at Whithaven last night, and I lost at play—but I will not disgust you with details. How deuced unfortunate that we should have met like this!" he ended, with a groan.

"It is, indeed," I answered, coldly.

"You remember, do you not, that you did not like me six years ago?"

"Yes, I remember!"

"And now you will like me still less!"

"Without doubt."

He looked so dejected, so utterly chagrined and cast down, that I began to soften toward him, in spite of myself. All the Hawkstones seem to possess the fatal gift of beauty! This wild Vincent is wonderfully handsome, with his sleepy blue eyes and red-brown curls.

"What shall I do to win your forgiveness, Miss Ravenel?" he implored. "Name a penance and let me perform it. Here comes old Harris up the walk—shall I ask his pardon in your presence?—shall I?" eagerly.

"In common decency you can do no less?" I answered, with severity.

"Come, then!"

He dashed down the walk like a whirlwind, to the alarm of Harris, who braced himself as if in expectation of another assault.

"I apologize a thousand times over, old fellow!" Vincent fairly shouted. "I have turned over a new leaf—'pon my soul, I'll never do so again! Quick, absolve me, Harris!"

And he bent his knee, and bowed his red-brown curls with a mock-penitent air.

"Lord, sir," said Harris, "don't do that. I knew 'twas nothing but a prank—I forgive you fully, sir."

Back rushed the culprit to me, gay, eager, laughing.

"It's all right now, isn't it, Miss Ravenel?" he asked.

"I—I suppose it is," I answered, doubtfully.

And then we went in to breakfast.

Mrs. Otway presided at the meal. Vincent Hawkstone's conduct was irreproachable. Most people possess a dual nature. The ruffian in him had retired to the background and the gentleman was in the ascendant. His manner to me was deference itself.

"You have become a very princess-like person, Miss Ravenel," he said, as he watched me from the corners of

his sleepy eyes. "I wonder what Prince Lucifer will say when he sees you?—will you take his breath, as you did mine? Faith, I know scores of pretty girls, and I am usually brazen enough in their presence, but when you first looked at me this morning, I felt as though I had received an electric shock—anybody could have knocked me down with a feather. Now, it's rather odd, is it not, Miss Ravenel, that Fate should lead you back to this island? Depend upon it, your future destiny is hopelessly mixed up with that of the Hawkstones."

"I mean to keep Miss Ravenel here always!" cried little Bee.

"Do, my dear child!" he answered, with a mischievous laugh, "and rely upon me to second with heart and hand all your efforts in that direction!"

Mrs. Otway looked grave, and tried to turn the conversation.

"Mr. Vincent, when did you last hear from your cousin?" she asked.

His gay, boyish face changed.

"Let me see," he answered, carelessly; "I chanced to be in New York a day or two ago, and I met Prince Lucifer on Broadway, and lunched with him at Delmonico's. He had arrived from Europe on the *Scotia* a few hours before."

"Basil Hawkstone in New York?" cried Mrs. Otway, in amazement.

Vincent smiled, lazily.

"Yes; he has been winning laurels with the English in Egypt—got a wound in the face from an Arab spear, and then a fever, which laid him up in Cairo; so he determined to come home for a few days. You will see no more of him, however, than if he was still abroad. Tempest Island abounds in unpleasant associations for his highness—told me himself that he had no intention of coming down here—means to play the exile a while longer—has already engaged passage on some steamer that sails in a few days—is going to spend the Winter with a dragoman in a *dehabeeh* on the Nile."

Bee set up a dismal wail.

"Papa shall not go away again!" she cried. "You must write to him, Miss Ravenel—you must take me to New York to find him. Ought he to go back to Egypt, and not come to see me once—just once?"

I had to bite my lips to keep back the unspoken sympathy which I felt for the child. Vincent looked greatly amused at this appeal to me.

"I fear that Miss Ravenel would find herself powerless in this case," he said. "Prince Lucifer has become a confirmed rover; nothing will hold him here."

"It is very unfortunate," sighed Mrs. Otway, "for his islanders love him dearly, and are more than anxious to have him with them again."

"I doubt," sneered Vincent, "if they ever see his face more. It is easier to turn the sea from this island than Prince Lucifer from any purpose to which he sets his mind. I am coming down here soon as his viceroy. The island folks may as well begin to get used to me, for the day is at hand when I shall be their master in good earnest."

"God forbid!" said Mrs. Otway, sharply.

I arose from the table and took little Bee's hand.

"Let us go," I said, "and find the schoolroom, dear."

Vincent sprang to open the door for me. As I passed through I heard him mutter:

"I know not what you have done to me this morning, Jetta Ravenel; but one thing I *do* comprehend with deadly certainty—my fate is for ever sealed. I am your slave from this hour!"

CHAPTER XIV.

JETTA STILL SPEAKS.

—"A land
Where it seems always afternoon—
All round the coast the languid air doth swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream."

I HAVE been on the island a week, but have not ventured again into the chamber where Philip Hawkstone was murdered, nor seen anything more of the Hawkstone ghost. In a cheerful room, at the top of the house, Bee

and I sit at lessons. I find my pupil backward, but very bright, and eager to learn. Instead of winning laurels with the English in Egypt, Basil Hawkstone might have been better employed, I think, in looking after the welfare of his only child.

July 12th.—Bee and I went to walk on the salt, wet beach, amid flying spray, and clamorous fishhawks. In every dry tree the nests of these birds are perched—immense, grotesque things, made of mud and sticks and fishbones.

"Nobody at the island ever kills the hawks," said Bee. "Every year they come to us on the 20th of May, and leave on the 20th of October. It's odd, isn't it, that birds can remember dates so well?"

We wandered on through coarse, salt grass, and over sand dunes, till we came to some low cliffs near a wooded inlet. Here Bee began to show signs of fatigue; so I spread my shawl on a rock, and left her sitting upon it, like a little queen on a throne, while I went a few rods further on to sketch.

I was transferring to my beloved sketch-book the weird outlines of the columnar "Old Woman" who guards the entrance to the little bay, when I heard a dip of oars, and a boat glided round the point, and into the Inlet. A single rower propelled it—a female of powerful build, with a red handkerchief knotted under her chin, and a pair of brawny, bare arms gleaming in the sunshine. I had seen Peg Patton in former days, and was nowise disconcerted when she rested on her oars, and called out gruffly:

"Halloo there! Are you the Southern girl, come again to Tempest Island?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Draw nearer," she said, "and let me look at you."

I went close to the water's edge. There were bait and fishing-tackle and a little heap of scaly beauties in the bottom of the boat, mixed up with scanty skirts and a pair of bare, brown feet.

"Look at me as much as you like, Peggy," I said, laughing; "but let me also look at you. The privilege must be mutual—I want to put you in a sketch."

Her eyes pierced me like gimlets.

"Sketch away, then!" she answered, roughly; "I see you've fulfilled your early promise, girl—God knows you are handsome enough to make mischief, here, or anywhere else. Beauty is a curse to most women. I live alone, but I hear things. What brings Vincent Hawkstone late and early to this island since you came back? Be warned by me—give that man a wide berth. He has a black heart—he will stop at nothing to gain his own ends."

The blood flew into my face.

"I'm sure you don't mean to be impertinent, Peggy—" I began, when a shrill scream from the spot where I had left Bee interrupted me.

I dropped my sketch-book and flew, rather than ran, to the child. She had fallen from the rock, and was lying prone on the earth, helpless with terror. I snatched her up.

"Miss Ravenel," she screamed, clinging about my neck, "a dead woman has been here, all in white, with white hair hanging down, and cold as stone! She held and kissed me, and I screamed and fell; then she went away behind the rocks."

"My dear child, what *are* you saying?" I cried, aghast.

"Look, look!" urged Bee; "there is a piece of her shroud!" pointing to a shred of white cashmere that hung from an edge of the rock. "Oh, I *know* she was dead, Miss Ravenel—I know she was what Anne, the nursemaid, calls a spook!"

I soothed the child as best I could.

"Dead people do not walk, Bee," I expostulated, "nor wear gowns of this texture. I do not know what you have seen, dear, but I beg you will not speak of it to any one, especially to Anne, or the other servants. Do not even think of it again."

She had received a severe nervous shock, and the fall from the rock had hurt her, also. I took her in my arms.

"I will carry you home, dear," I said: "you are very tiny, and it is not far to the house."

I set forth with my burden. I had reached the desolate sand dunes, and was toiling through the coarse grass, when Vincent Hawkstone suddenly appeared and snatched Bee from me.

"Good Heaven!" he cried, in an angry tone; "why do you carry this heavy child? Your devotion to her is something absurd—yes, maddening. I must protest against your *always* playing second fiddle, either to Prince Lucifer or his daughter."

"It is my business and pleasure alike to devote myself to Bee," I answered, coldly. "She had a fall on the rocks. She is hurt—I need not make further explanations."

"How sharp you are!" he drawled, with a long, lingering look that turned me red and angry; "I confess that I am by nature as jealous as a Turk. Now, don't frown and make things unpleasant, for I have come to take tea at the Hall to-night."

I lifted my eyebrows.

"Again!"

He laughed.

"Oh, you need not tell me that I tax Mrs. Otway's hospitality to the utmost. There's no pressure of law business at Whithaven just now, and I am drawn to this island as irresistibly as steel to magnet."

We went on to the house, he carrying Bee, who struggled and kicked most of the way, for she detests Vincent, and we had tea on the big porch, curtained in vines, and surrounded by ranks of lilies, and odd, foreign jars full of blossoming things. White moths brushed through the leaves; fire-flies flashed, like living jewels, around our heads. On a distant headland the island-beacon glowed, like a Cyclop's eye, and below the ancient sea-wall fishing-boats moved, spirit-like, over the water.

After the meal I sat down to the piano and sang some Scotch airs, and Vincent Hawkstone played a flute delightfully, while Mrs. Otway watched us both in utter disapproval. He is at the Hall daily—she finds him monotonous, perhaps, even as I do. When the music was over, Hawkstone put down his flute upon the piano.

I saw that it was a very elegant instrument, richly inlaid with gold.

"Here is another heirloom of the Hawkstones," he said, lightly; "this flute was once the property of a young count of Rochambeau's army, who was entertained in this house a century ago. He was said to be the best flute-player at the court of Louis XVI. He brought this pretty affair along with him for the after-dinner amusement of his Yankee host, and, I dare say, accompanied the Madame Hawkstone of that period on the spinet or harpsichord. Unluckily, madame was beautiful and young, and she did not love her husband. The count with the handsome face, and the airs he had learned at Versailles, played so well that his host complimented him highly; whereupon the gallant Frenchman begged him to accept this flute as a souvenir of the occasion. So here it is, after a hundred years, among the Hawkstone relics."

"Is that all?" I asked.

"So far as the French count is concerned, for he never came to the island again; but the young and beautiful Mrs. Hawkstone began to pine from that hour; and when the fleet sailed for France, she was found, drowned and dead, on the beach by Peg Patton's Inlet. That's only one of the many tragedies in which the history of our race abounds."

I shuddered, and rose up from the piano.

"I have letters to write," I said. "Good-night."

He followed me to the door.

"Do you think you have half forgiven me," he muttered, "for my first misdemeanor here? You repel me resolutely, you know," and his blue eyes seemed to narrow under their sleepy lids. "If you do not thaw before long, Miss Ravenel, I shall be tempted to end my unhappy days, as did the fair Mrs. Hawkstone, of whom we were speaking just now."

I pretended not to hear him, and passed on up the stair to my own chamber.

There I donned my outer garments, and creeping out of the house by a side door, I started for the beach, to

find the sketch-book which I had dropped there at the time of Bee's mishap. That book was one of my few treasures. I felt that I must recover it at all hazards. I hurried over the sand dunes toward the Inlet. Night had fallen, and a storm was rising. Wild clouds raced across the haggard face of the young moon; the surf roared on an outer reef. Around the island a schooner came gliding under short sail to make a lee. I heard the rattle of a cable, and caught the gleam of an anchor-light.

On I went, till I reached the Inlet. There I searched everywhere, but could not find my sketch-book. A cloud had passed over the moon. I knelt down, in my eager, anxious quest, groping with both hands along the wet shingle. While doing this, I heard an approaching step, and a man burst out of the forest path by the border of the creek and almost stumbled over me. I started to my feet, with my heart in my throat.

"I beg your pardon!" he said; "are you looking for anything?"

"Yes," I answered; "for a book that was dropped here this afternoon."

"Allow me to restore it," and he held out my missing treasure. "I picked it up as I was crossing this beach an hour ago."

I looked up at him in the moonlight, and became aware of two things—first, that I was standing in the presence of an extraordinary person; next, that his eyes had gone over me, like a flash of hot Summer lightning. Yes, an uncommon person, certainly, with a profile cut as if from gray stone. There was a scar on one cheek. He had a lordly, soldierly bearing—the look of one born to authority and power. Before I could gather voice to thank him, he said, quietly:

"I see; you are Miss Ravenel. Your name is written in your book—I took the liberty to read it there. Are servants no longer employed at Tempest Hall, that you come alone to the Inlet at this hour?"

I drew back, my heart beating furiously.

"There is nothing at Tempest Island," I answered, coldly, "to harm any one, at any time."

"Do not believe it," he sneered; "fearful crimes have been committed here. The trail of the serpent is over it all."

Then he lifted a voice like a bugle, and gave a curious call. It was answered somewhere from the wood, and that wild woman, Peg Patton, came running down the path and out upon the beach, barefooted and with a red handkerchief knotted over her gray hair.

"What's your will, sir?" she cried, breathlessly; "shall I row you back to Whithaven? I can do it better than any man of them all——"

"No," he interrupted, with a gesture toward me; "my boatmen are waiting just around the point. You see this young lady: take her back to Tempest Hall, Peg, and let no harm happen to her on the way."

Peg stared hard at me in the moonlight.

"She came hunting for the book, eh?" she said, dryly.

"Yes," answered the man. "Can I trust her to your care?"

"That you can!" answered Peg Patton. "Good-night, sir—it will be many long days, I s'pose, afore I see you again?"

"Years, Peggy; not days," he corrected.

"Well, sir," said Peg, sadly, "I'm glad you came down to the Inlet, to see *her* to-night—she won't last much longer. You will go your own way, sir, and nobody can keep you; but roaming over the world never yet cured trouble. Now, make haste, Miss Ravenel," turning sharply to me.

I needed no urging. She strode off, like a grenadier, and I followed. When we reached the sand dunes, she asked:

"Did you recognize that man, miss?"

"Yes," I answered, calmly; "he was Basil Hawkstone. You need not go with me further, Peggy. I am not in the least afraid."

"I shall do as *he* bade me," she answered, crossly; "his word is my law. You have a good memory, miss. He is going across seas again, and he came down to the

island to-night to see a friend, afore he should sail. You'd better not speak of his visit to anybody at Tempest Hall."

"I will not," I answered.

She tramped on before me to the very door of the house.

"Now, you are safe," she muttered; "he told me to take care of you, and I have done it;" and she turned and left me.

CHAPTER XV.

JETTA SPEAKS ON.

ONCE inside my own room, I wondered greatly at the secret visit of the island sovereign to his little sea-girt kingdom. His stony face, with the lightning eyes, and the scar on the cheek, seemed staring at me from every corner of the chamber. The sketch-book, which had been at the bottom of the night's adventure, I threw impatiently into a drawer. As I did so, my eyes fell upon a letter which had arrived in the evening mail, and been laid on my toilet-table by Mrs. Otway. It was from Gabriel, and ran as follows:

"I wonder how you are getting on at that absurd island? Tolerably well, I hope, as my prospects for helping you have diminished, rather than increased, since our interview in New York. A strange thing has befallen me, Jetta—I might truthfully call it a terrible thing, for I fear it will destroy all my hopes of inheriting old Hypo's money. In short, I have been smitten by a thunderbolt. But let me explain:

"I went down to Newport with old Hypo and Doris Rokewood, as I told you I was about to do. It was like traveling with a caravan, for old Hypo's liver was upset, as it usually is, and he must needs bury himself in wraps and rugs, and medicine-chests and other infernal paraphernalia, besides taking two valets along to attend him. Strange to say, Miss Rokewood seems really fond of the old dyspeptic, and her patience with his whims is something marvelous. I have already described her to you as a blonde of the Juno type—rather too stately to suit my fancy, for I have a *penchant* for diminutive women. But society men call Miss Rokewood a deuced fine girl, and she has a fortune in her own right.

"The night before we started for Newport I offered her my heart and hand, in the library of old Hypo's Fifth Avenue palace—a superb room, by-the-way, full of choice *bric-à-brac*. Sutton

made his money in the Far East, and his house abounds in rich stuffs of Turkestân, velvets heavy with gold and silver thread, inlaid cabinets full of gems and antique coins, engraved with verses from Hafiz and the Koran, tiger-skins, silver filigree, and old porcelain of fabulous price. Well, as I was saying, Miss Rokewood and I met in the library, under an ancient silver lamp; and near by, on a pedestal, a little diabolic Chinese god sat grinning at us. Miss Rokewood wore a Worth dinner dress of dull blue, with diamond ornaments, and she looked more subdued and less mannish than usual. I swore that I loved her to distraction, and begged her to marry me.

"'Are you quite sure of your own heart, Mr. Ravenel?' she said, looking me straight in the eye, though her color came and went in an alarming way.

"'I am sure that it has passed from my own keeping into yours,' I cried; 'I cannot live without you, Doris, and your guardian approves of my passion.'

"She gave me her large, shapely hand, blushing the while like a schoolgirl.

"'I will marry you,' she said, simply; and that diabolic god grinned on us from his pedestal, as though he thought it a very good joke that I, a penniless secretary, with only my good looks to recommend me, should win an heiress by simply asking for her.

"Old Hypo gave us his blessing, and the next day we went to Newport. There, twenty-four hours later—God help me!—I met my fate! It appeared in a turn of the Ocean Drive—a cream-tinted basket phaeton, low, curved like a shell, and, attached to it, a pair of lustrous ponies of the same hue—in the carriage, a girl, *petite*, fairylike, wearing a dress of black velvet, with the corsage full of Maréchal Niel roses. She turned upon me a small, white, angelic face, set in a halo of hair like spun gold. Out of a pair of innocent sea-blue eyes flashed the fire that scorched and consumed me in a moment—for it was all the work of a moment.

> "'She looked so lovely as she swayed
> The rein with dainty finger-tips;
> A man had given all other bliss,
> And all his worldly worth for this—
> To waste his whole heart in one kiss
> Upon her perfect lips!'

"I that had toyed with Love as with a plaything—laughed at it—scorned it—suddenly felt the full measure of its vengeful power. My Southern blood leaped madly through my veins. I was dazed, blinded, overwhelmed. But why do I write these things to you, a mere child, who cannot understand them? It is enough for you to know that life is all changed for me. I love a creature, half angel, half woman, and I live, as it seems, suspended 'twixt heaven and hell. Who or what she is, I need not

tell you now. You would not approve of her—old Hypo and all his kind would condemn her pitilessly. That does not matter. Come life or death, come evil or good, prosperity or utter destruction, there is henceforth but one woman in the world for me! I cannot turn back from the way that I have chosen—if I do not win that gold-haired enchantress for my own, I am for ever undone."

I put down my brother's letter with a disturbed and anxious heart. What strange madness had come to Gabriel? A foreboding of evil got possession of me. Who was the girl in the curved phaeton—the sorceress, that had bewitched him with a single look? I went to bed in great depression of spirits, and cried myself to sleep.

The next day was the Sabbath, and with the rest of the household I attended service in the island church. These islanders are a God-fearing people, and every Sunday afternoon a clergyman comes over from Whithaven and breaks to them the Bread of Life.

By skillful management I succeeded in placing Mrs. Otway betwixt myself and Vincent Hawkstone in the family pew, but I could not keep his eyes from my face during the service. As we filed out of church, Bee said, solemnly:

"Cousin Vincent, you ought to look at the minister and the hymnbook, and not *all* the time at Miss Ravenel. It isn't devout, you know."

He patted her head, laughing.

"One is bound to look longest at the thing that pleases one most, my dear!" he answered, audaciously.

"Let us go into the graveyard, Miss Ravenel, and pick daisies," said Bee.

I allowed her to lead me into the green inclosure. Vincent Hawkstone followed. I seated myself on a stone slab, raised on four legs, and inscribed with the name and virtues of some dead islander, and Hawkstone threw himself in the grass at my feet. He made a striking picture, as he lay there, with his hat off, and the waning sun slanting on his red-gold curls and over his flushed and eager face.

"Hope I sha'n't disturb any of these old duffers, by stretching my living body upon their dead ones, in this

reckless fashion," he laughed. "Of course, you know, Miss Ravenel, that the island has been haunted ever since Philip Hawkstone's murder. There's a genuine ghost here—I saw it once myself."

I was glad that Bee had wandered out of earshot.

"You saw it yourself?" I echoed, carelessly. "What was it like?"

"Like the author of all men's woes—a woman, of course," he answered. "Several of the islanders, I find, have encountered her from time to time, but wild horses wouldn't draw the truth from them; their lips are sealed on the subject of the murder. All the same, every mother's son of them knows that Mrs. Hawkstone killed her husband."

I grew red with wrath.

"How dare you utter such a gross falsehood?" I cried. "Mrs. Hawkstone a murderess? Never! It is an outrage to the dead and the living alike to even hint at such a thing!"

"We will not quarrel about so old an affair," he sneered; "it cannot in the least matter *who* killed my uncle, at this late day. Depend upon it, however, that sly cat *was* the murderess, though, I admit, she hid her guilt skillfully. But to return to ghosts: 'There are more things in heaven and earth, *Horatio*, than are dreamed of in your philosophy.' I met our island spook one night on the beach. She startled me not a little, for she was as white as ocean foam, and was dressed in some long, ghostly garment, like a shroud. I gave chase to her, and she disappeared somewhere among the sand dunes. I wonder"—dryly—"if that she pirate, Peg Patton, knows anything about ghosts!"

I was silent, remembering Bee's fright of the previous day—remembering, too, my own experience in Philip Hawkstone's death-chamber.

There was a brief silence. Vincent lay back in the grass, and watched me through half-closed eyes.

"By-the-way," he resumed, at last, "Prince Lucifer sails for Europe again this coming week. The Gothamites, it seems, have been making a social lion of him since

he appeared among them; but he hates society—he'll be off, fast enough, at the appointed time. Rather odd that he doesn't visit the island before his departure! Not that I want him here—far from it; for of late the place has become an Eden to me, and any intruder would be unwelcome. Yes, an Eden, Jetta, and you are the Eve, and I the Adam!"

I started up from the memorial slab. He caught my dress—lifted to me a pale, passionate face.

"Stop, Jetta! You have been staving this thing off for days; but you must listen now, for I *will* speak! I have no words to tell how I love you—how madly I long to marry you! True, I am a wild fellow, but you can make me what you will. Save me, Jetta, from myself—save me, my beautiful darling! You can do it, and you only, of all living women!"

Divided betwixt pity and aversion, I stood, an unwilling prisoner, holding to the slab.

"I have no ambition to marry a man to reform him," I answered, coldly. "The woman who chooses such a mission is either a fool or a seeker after martyrdom. Be a man, and save yourself; *I* cannot do it, Vincent Hawkstone, because I do not, and never can, care in the least for you!"

The look that went over his face frightened me. Silly, headstrong boy! He held me with hot hands, as though he would never let me go.

"Don't say that, Jetta," he pleaded; "don't cut me entirely off from hope! Say you love me a little—a very little."

"Not a bit!" I protested, stoutly; "a false hope, as everybody knows, is more cruel than none at all."

"By the Lord above us, Jetta," he cried, "I will *not* take this answer! I loved you years ago, when we were girl and boy together on the island. I rejoiced in my soul when Prince Lucifer lost you by his mad marriage; and I then swore to myself that you should take me for a husband some day, in place of him. That oath I still mean to keep! You cruel little demon, how can you stand here, with those ardent Southern eyes, and that

mouth made only for kisses, and repulse me without mercy? I intend to make you my wife, Jetta, and at once! To-morrow I shall go to New York to find Basil, and ask him, in view of our impending marriage, to increase my allowance, and put me in old Harris's place here on the island."

At this extraordinary announcement by Vincent my wrath blazed up.

"Let go my dress, Vincent Hawkstone!" I commanded; "the most charitable interpretation that I can put upon your conduct is that you have certainly been drinking again."

His wicked eyes flashed.

"You *know* I am not drunk!" he cried, hoarsely; "this is all silly coquetry, cruel pretense! You love me, but you will not own it. You love me, or you could not have been so kind to me."

"Kind to you!" I stormed. "I have shown you common civility—nothing more."

"It is true that your tongue has remained silent, Jetta, but your splendid eyes have made me no end of promises, and you shall not recall them—by Heaven, you shall not! You are mine—you shall never belong to any other man. You are mine, and have you I will, whether you are willing or unwilling."

It came to me at that moment that Vincent Hawkstone was a totally reckless and unscrupulous person. Bee, attracted by his loud voice, came limping back to me over the old graves, with her hands full of daisies. At sight of her, Vincent leaped to his feet.

"Remember my words, Jetta," he said, hurriedly. "I go to make all necessary arrangements; in a few days I shall return to the island, and marry you, in spite of yourself, for I am not the man to stop at trifles—as you will discover, all in good time!"

With that he leaped across the low mounds, and went off through the churchyard-gate, never looking back—went, as he had himself declared, to make preparations for our marriage. I first laughed at the utter absurdity of the thing, and then cried from pure vexation. Verily,

he *is* unscrupulous—this wild Hawkstone—a person to be feared. One consolation remains to me, however—if he annoys me further, I am free to leave Tempest Island at once, and seek a situation elsewhere.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADEMOISELLE ZEPHYR.

Two MEN descended the steps of a handsome hotel, and strolled away down the broad, elm-shaded streets of Whithaven. Twilight had fallen. A full moon was rising over the harbor, and the spires and roofs of the busy Yankee city. Stars flashed through the feathery tree-tops. Already the long rows of shop-windows blazed with light. Every reliable clock in Whithaven was pointing to the hour of seven.

The taller and elder of the two men puffed carelessly at an after-dinner cigar; the younger and smaller held his own weed unlighted, forgotten—he was engaged exclusively in watching his companion.

"I feared you might sail, Basil, before I reached New York," he said, airily, "so I took the liberty to telegraph to you."

"And your message puzzled me so much," answered the other, "that I concluded to run down to Whithaven, and ask you to explain yourself."

Time, trouble, years of wandering and adventure, had left their marks on Basil Hawkstone. The golden tan of a tropic sun was on his face; the early fairness of his hair and beard had darkened to a deep, rich bronze. One cheek bore the scar of an Arab lance. He towered head and shoulders over his cousin. His Greek profile, his iron-gray eyes, had grown cold and stern and forbidding. But at thirty Basil Hawkstone was a superbly handsome man.

"I asked you to increase my allowance," said Vincent, sulkily, "and give me the place of overseer at Tempest Island."

"Yes," assented Hawkstone, "that's the very thing puzzled me. *Why* should I increase your allowance—

'pon my soul, the request is getting monotonous—it has been made again and again, and granted as often. Is your law business good for anything here at Whithaven? As for making you overseer in Harris's place, that's out of the question, you know. From all that I hear of you, Vincent, I conclude that you are not the person with whom I care to trust my revenues."

Vincent colored.

"Oh, but I've mended my ways, Prince Lucifer," he answered, with an uneasy laugh. "Law is very quiet in Whithaven just now, and I'm not successful at the trade, anyway. I dare say I've mistaken my vocation. At present my desires all set toward Tempest Island—in fact, I like the place quite as much as you detest it. Then, too, I'm going to marry."

Basil Hawkstone took the cigar from his lips, and stared hard at the other.

"Married!" he echoed, in a tone of mingled horror and disgust.

"Yes; I know you hate matrimony yourself, but you can't expect that your ill-luck will deter others from making the same venture."

"True!" said Hawkstone, coldly; "and, after all, you ought to marry, Vincent—you are the future ruler of the island—indeed, there is only Bee's life, and that a frail one, betwixt you and the entire Hawkstone fortune. I am not particularly pleased with you, but you are my male heir notwithstanding. No doubt matrimony will be a good thing for your morals, also—that is," with sharp suspicion, "if you have made the right choice."

Vincent shrugged his shoulders.

"Be at ease, Prince Lucifer—I did not think it wise to follow in *your* footsteps!"—the elder man winced, and tossed away his half-consumed Havana. "The lady I mean to marry is your former ward—your late mother's Southern *protégée*, and at present date, your daughter's governess—Jetta Ravenel."

Hawkstone stopped short in his walk and stared at his cousin.

"*Ah!*" he said, in a strange tone.

"Perhaps you don't know that Miss Ravenel is now living at Tempest Hall?" volunteered Vincent.

"Yes, I know."

"Who told you?" sharply, suspiciously.

"I must decline to say."

"Very well. Mrs. Otway brought her down to us several weeks ago. Seeing that she was your step-mamma's especial pet, I hope you will give her a liberal dowry, Prince Lucifer?"

Hawkstone gnawed his lip.

"I will," he answered, very gravely, "for I have neglected her in an unpardonable manner in the last six years—in fact, left her entirely to others. I fear my poor mother would scarcely think that I had fulfilled the promise which I made her on her deathbed. In Heaven's name, Vincent, how did Jetta Ravenel come to choose *you* for a husband? You are not the man to make any woman happy; then, too, she is still very young—too young to be caught in the cursed trap of matrimony!"

Vincent laughed, uneasily.

"No woman is too young to love, and your reflections upon me, Prince Lucifer, are deucedly unjust, for I have turned over a new leaf—I am a reformed man—that girl possesses no end of influence over me. If you really wish to keep me from going altogether to the dogs, don't attempt to thwart me in this matter of marriage."

But Basil Hawkstone's conscience, so long dormant, seemed suddenly awake.

"I'm not sure that I ought to allow Miss Ravenel to throw herself away," he answered, dryly. "In spite of your protestations, Vincent, I do not quite believe in you. My mother would never approve of such a match. With her beauty and education, the girl ought to do better."

"Beauty!" repeated Vincent, in a stifled voice; "how do you know that she *is* a beauty?"

"As a child, she was one. It is safe to infer that she has not greatly changed."

"Deuce take you, Basil! What right have you, anyway, to interfere betwixt us? Jetta is eighteen, and her

own mistress. You have been no sort of a guardian to her—never looked after her half decently. She has a brother. Of course *he* is her natural protector, and if he doesn't complain, you need not. What legal right have you over her?"

"None whatever!" replied Hawkstone, coldly. "You advance an argument that I cannot refute. Without doubt her brother is the person to look after her. I should not dream of disputing his authority. Heaven knows I do not care to meddle in any woman's love affairs. You adore her, I dare say?"

"Yes, by my soul, I do!" answered Vincent Hawkstone, hoarsely.

"And she adores you?" with a shrug of his broad shoulders.

"We will not talk about *that*," said Vincent, drawing his breath hard. "In view of the change which I contemplate, both in morals and other things, Prince Lucifer, I fancied you might be glad to extend me a helping hand."

"Very well," assented Hawkstone, in a bored tone, "I will see what can be done for you. I will also instruct my lawyer to furnish Miss Ravenel's *dot*. Perhaps I ought to run down to Tempest Island, before I go abroad again, and take one look at my daughter. There is no telling when I may return to America——"

Vincent grew pale with alarm. Now would his bold, bad plans miscarry surely!

"*You* go down to the island!" he sneered. "I thought nothing could tempt you to revisit the scene of your matrimonial infelicities. Bee is growing up, happy and contented. She gets on very well without you—has forgotten, in fact, that she has a parent. Your appearance at Tempest Hall would cause as great a sensation as your father's ghost."

Hawkstone's cold face grew sombre.

"Poor little Bee!" he said, sadly. "It is but natural that she should cease to remember the father who has lived afar from her so long. I surely have no hankering for Tempest Island, or anything upon it. You may con-

duct your affairs without any meddling of mine, Vincent. Of course I wish you joy. See that you make Miss Ravenel a good husband."

They had come to a great open square, twinkling with many lights, and resounding with music. In the centre of the place an immense tent was pitched, flanked by others of smaller dimensions, and surrounded by a multitude of noisy hawkers, sight-seers and pestiferous small boys.

"By Jove!" cried Vincent, with sudden excitement, "there's something to see here, Prince Lucifer—let's go in."

"*What's* to see?" demanded Hawkstone, in a disgusted tone—a circus-tent was always an offense to his eyes.

"Oh, Egyptian jugglers and Arab dervishes—perhaps you may recognize them as some of your Cairo friends. Come along, old fellow! As well pass an hour here as elsewhere. You can't go back to New York till ten o'clock, you know."

They passed through the opening in the canvas walls, and found themselves in an immense tent, brilliantly lighted, and resounding with a band of many and vastly echoing pieces. The night's performance had just commenced as the two Hawkstones entered. Tiers of seats, reaching almost to the canvas roof, were literally packed with people. Only two or three chairs on the platform, reserved for the swell element of the multitude, remained unoccupied. To these the pair made their way, and Vincent Hawkstone, who was well known at Whithaven, immediately found himself in a circle of friends.

"Deuced vulgar place—a circus!" said a pale youth with an eyeglass—Vincent's law partner; "but that little *equestrienne*, Mademoiselle Zephyr, will richly repay you for any contamination with the great unwashed—eh, colonel?"

"She will, indeed," answered the person addressed—a man of distinguished appearance, who had a bald spot on his crown, and wore a diamond-pin in his shirt-front. "Little Zephyr is a blazing beauty—a genuine Circe. She has only to smile once upon a man, and he is her

slave for life. Do you see that fellow in the front row?" —directing attention to a young man with a Spanish cast of face, who occupied a chair a little in advance of Basil Hawkstone. He was in evening dress, and held an immense bouquet of hothouse exotics in his hand.

"Looks no end of a swell," muttered Vincent Hawkstone; "who may he be?"

"A Southerner from Louisiana," answered Colonel Latimer, "and the private secretary and presumptive heir of some rich New Yorker. His name is Ravenel, and he's awfully far gone on little Zephyr—quite off his head, in fact. Gossip says his employer will be sure to throw him out, neck and heels, if he gets wind of this *affaire d'amour*, but the youngster is too infatuated to think of dollars and cents now."

For the first time since his unlucky marriage Basil Hawkstone was inside a circus-tent. He wondered at his own stupidity in following Vincent to such a place. The talk of the others drifted, of course, to his ears. He fixed his gray eyes sharply on the Spanish-faced youth in the front row. Ravenel! He could never hear that name without a thrill of interest. Was this Jetta's brother? Yea, it must be! And he was in love with a circus-rider. Basil Hawkstone drew his breath hard.

"Poor devil!" he said to himself; "you have my profound pity. How human experience repeats itself, to be sure!"

Down there in the big ring, some skillful hurdle-jumping was going on, and a trick-horse delighted the audience with a variety of graceful feats. Whirling dervishes appeared, and brown jugglers, whose doings simply provoked a smile from Basil Hawkstone.

These retired in turn, and a hush of expectancy fell; then a girl, mounted on a coal-black horse, rode out into the arena alone. It was Mademoiselle Zephyr.

She was small in figure and exquisitely rounded. Her face was as white and pure as a snowdrop, flawless, too, in feature, and lighted by velvety violet eyes, softly shining under night-black lashes. Her hair fell to her slight waist in a yellow torrent — angelic hair, rippling and

flying in countless waves and curls. She was dressed in a gay little Spanish jacket and short, fluffy skirts of rose-colored gauze, bright with spangles, and at sight of her beauty the crowded tiers broke into vociferous applause.

All but Basil Hawkstone. He sat as if turning to stone. Of course he knew her instantly, for six years had changed her not a whit. That fatal beauty, so innocent, so infantile, was the same, the very same, that had wrecked his life.

Vincent Hawkstone recognized her, too. He gave a start, a smothered exclamation, and looked sharply at his cousin; but Prince Lucifer's magnificently cold, stern face betrayed nothing. He might have been that Sphinx from whose land he had just come. Dudley, the lawyer with the eyeglass, went on talking.

"Look at the Southerner *now*," he said; "eyes all aflame—passion-pale face, like a spectre's—oh, he's quite cracked for that little beauty! And a nice race she'll lead him, you may be sure—she's a heartless flirt, is Zephyr—numbers her victims by the dozens, and has no pity for any of them."

As silent, as motionless as a graven image, Basil Hawkstone, the ex-husband, sat in his chair just behind Gabriel Ravenel, the lover, and gazed steadily down into the ring below. He saw her dash, like a little whirlwind, around it—saw her burst through scores of paper balloons, alighting squarely, every time, on the back of the night-black horse—saw her execute some exquisite ballet steps, her artistic pose emphasizing still further her delicate beauty. How the tiny feet twinkled in the double *pirouette!* How the soft eyes shone and the red lips smiled. The applause became deafening. Mademoiselle blew a kiss from her white finger-tips to the audience. As she did so, Gabriel Ravenel, in the front row, leaned and flung his hothouse exotics in a perfumed shower on the lovely rider.

She looked up, smiling, at the unexpected deluge, her eyes met first the impassioned face of her lover, and then, by some unhappy fatality, traveled over Ravenel's head and alighted on Basil Hawkstone, sitting in the

next chair, stony, forbidding, gazing down at her in unmoved recognition.

The change that swept mademoiselle's face was appalling. Instantly the glow of triumph and pleasure died out of it. She uttered a sharp cry, pitched forward, and fell under her horse's feet, prone in the sawdust of the ring.

All was hubbub and confusion in a moment. Up rose the great audience *en masse.* Gabriel Ravenel leaped down into the arena, but was pushed back by a painted clown, who lifted the girl hastily and carried her into the dressing-tent. A moment or two after, a man mounted the platform where stood the reserved chairs, and twitched Basil Hawkstone's sleeve.

"Come with me," he said. "Her horse stepped upon her—she is dying—she wants to speak to *you.*"

Dying! An appalling word at all times, and under all circumstances! Hawkstone arose without a word, and followed the man to the dressing-tent.

There, on a sofa, lay the star of the ring, her blue eyes wild and glassy, the blood oozing over her lips, her breath coming fitful and difficult. She was surrounded by fellow-riders and various persons attached to the show. The painted face of the clown peered grotesquely over her shoulder. As Hawkstone approached she waved them all back.

"Leave us alone!" she gasped.

They vanished every one. Hawkstone was alone with his divorced wife. Then, presto, what a change was there! Mademoiselle Zephyr leaped from the sofa and stood before her former husband, not dying, not even injured, but full of wild, palpitating, turbulent life.

"At last we meet again!" she cried; "at last—after six weary years!"

"The meeting is not of my seeking," he answered, drawing coldly back. "When I entered this tent tonight I had not the faintest suspicion that you were riding here."

Her white bosom heaved under its vail of yellow curls. She was gazing up at him with great, fevered eyes.

"How stern, how unapproachable you look!" she said, in a breathless way. "You are not the same—I scarcely know you. Ah, you have traveled everywhere since we parted—you wear the scar of a hero. Women admire heroism, even in divorced husbands. I have followed your movements in all lands. There has rarely been a time when I quite lost track of you."

"What trick is this?" he demanded. "I was told that you were hurt—dying. What do you wish of me?"

"I wish to look once more in your face," she panted, "you who were once my lover—my own! Can you begrudge me so small a privilege?"

"Madam, you have a hundred lovers in the audience yonder!" he sneered.

The color flew into her cheek and out again.

"I shall not resent your gibes to-night, Basil—I am too wretched. Indeed, there is little of the old temper left in me. I have wept it away, perhaps. Oh, Basil, I want to hear something about my child—*our* child—my own baby Bee! It is cruel, is it not, to keep a mother so long from her little one? Sometimes"—with a sudden sob in her voice—"it seems as if my heart would break with the misery of it."

He stood as unmoved as granite.

"There can be little cruelty in keeping a child from the mother who deliberately forsakes it," he answered. "It is not possible that you have forgotten the circumstances under which you parted from your 'little one.' I can tell you nothing about Bee—I would not, if I could."

"Oh, Basil, you cannot mean that I shall never see my child again?"

"Madam, you are a superior actress, as well as an accomplished *equestrienne*," he sneered. "In your best days you did not love the child; to-day, through your agency, she is a cripple. Whence comes this sudden affection for Bee? I mean that the taint of the circus-ring shall never defile my daughter—she shall not see you until her character is formed—until she is old enough to pass judgment for herself upon the mother

who deserted home, husband and child for—*this!*" with a scathing glance around the canvas walls.

The tears shone on her lashes. She was very pale, and her lips had a grieved curve. She disconcerted him a little. He would rather have seen her in one of her old fiery moods.

"Basil!" she pleaded, softly, "I want Bee—give me back my child!"

"Impossible! You are no fit person to have her!"

"And you—are *you* a better guardian than I would be? For years you have left her to hirelings, it seems—you have wandered away from her to every land under the sun. I told you just now that I had managed to keep trace of your movements. I even know that you lately secured a governess for my child in the person of one whom I hated six years ago—whom I still hate—that Southern girl, Jetta Ravenel!"

"Madam," he answered, coldly, "I know very little about the domestic arrangements at Tempest Hall. I left the place long ago, to return to it, as I trust, no more. Bee is in good hands there, and all my orders concerning her are strictly enforced—that is quite enough for me. Now, since you are neither hurt nor dying, and since all further conversation between us, must to say the least, be unprofitable, I will leave you."

"Wait, Basil!" she implored, throwing herself before him. "Look at me one moment—do you find me changed?"

He let his reluctant eyes rest for an instant on the exquisite figure and the snowdrop face, in its shimmer of yellow hair; then he turned coldly away.

"Not in the least."

"Am I still beautiful, then?"

"There are thousands of tongues to tell you that without asking me."

Before he was aware she had fallen at his feet—she was clasping him wildly in her white arms.

"Basil, forgive me! I was only a child when I fled from you—I am now a woman, penitent, full of remorse for past follies—longing for my lost paradise in your

heart! I hate my triumphs, I hate my fame, I hate everything that lured me from you! When I went away, I meant to come back, after a little space—I did, indeed! Then I heard that you were determined to free yourself from me legally—next, that the courts had given you absolute divorce and the custody of Bee. The night the news came I was in Berlin—in the midst of such success, such adulation as quite frightened me. Ah, in that land, the circus ranks with the opera. I was *fêted* and caressed by the noblest——"

"I heard of it all," he interrupted, dryly, "even to the adoring students who unhitched the horses from your carriage, and dragged you to your hotel, and the young count, well known in diplomatic circles, who shot himself for love of you."

She writhed at his feet, a little heap of spangles and yellow hair, and palpitating white flesh.

"They asked for my heart," she sobbed, "when I had none to give them; you had crushed—killed it! All that night the terrible word, Divorce, danced before my eyes in letters of fire. You had cast me out for ever, even as your father, Philip Hawkstone, cast out your mother, years ago. Now listen! Can man put asunder what God hath joined? You are still my husband, Basil Hawkstone—I claim you as such!—and I am still your wife, and all the courts on earth cannot make it otherwise. Whatever our follies have been, this fact remains. Death only can part us! Take me back to your heart, Basil!—I have had enough of ambition, triumph, fame. Think how I have suffered when you can wring such words as these from me! I want nothing now, but to creep back to your arms, and live or die there, as you yourself may determine."

It was a piteous appeal, made with all the fervor and passion of a heartbroken woman; but the hard, cold lines of his face relaxed not a whit. He quietly shook off the beautiful arms that held him.

"You will pardon me, Mademoiselle Zephyr, if I decline to believe in your newly awakened love, he said. "I find such a stretch of imagination quite beyond me.

And even were it so, I should be forced to tell you that your regrets come too late. You forsook your child, you disgraced and deserted me, and the choice which you then made you must abide by. If you have grown older and wiser, so, too, have I, Mademoiselle Zephyr. I distrust you and all your kind, and my love for you is dead —killed by yourself and buried beyond resurrection. I wish you well—I can do no less—for you are Bee's mother; but Heaven knows I never wish to see your face or hear your voice again."

She leaped to her feet, pale as ashes, trembling in every limb.

"You mean this, Basil Hawkstone? My penitence and love are as nothing to you now? You will accept neither—you scorn and reject me—the mother of your child? You have learned to hate, where you once loved —to despise the beauty you once adored. Is that it?"

With cruel candor, he answered:

"That is it!"

"Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

For a moment her face was convulsed with rage, then her hand went up to her breast. She snatched something from the bosom of the gay Spanish jacket—a vial, full of pale liquid. It was well for Basil Hawkstone that he had not forgotten the past—that he understood the woman with whom he had to deal. Like lightning his iron hand fell on her white wrist, holding it powerless. In vain she strove with desperate strength to free herself —to fling the terrible fluid full in his face. In the struggle it spirted out on Hawkstone's hand, burning its way deep into his flesh; but he tore the vial from her, and ground it under his heel.

"And this is the way in which you would show your newly revived love, Mademoiselle Zephyr?" he said, dryly; "there is nothing more diabolic in life than vitriol-throwing!"

Baffled, furious, she faced him.

"From this hour, Basil Hawkstone, I am your deadly foe!" she hissed. "Since you will have no more of my

love, you shall know, instead, what my hate means! I will torment you till the last day of your life! I will haunt you ceaselessly—I will come betwixt you and your dearest wishes everywhere—I will be your curse—your utter destruction, if I can! You shall never escape me till one of us be dead."

"Mademoiselle Zephyr, I have had enough of scenes," answered Hawkstone, coldly; "the next time you attempt to depart this life, pray do not send for *me*—I must decline to be present. I dare say it is now time for you to appear again in the ring—farewell, I will not detain you longer."

With a polite bow, he walked quietly out of the dressing-tent. At the entrance a man was waiting, pale of face, excited of aspect.

Hawkstone recognized Gabriel Ravenel.

"Is she better?—will she live?" he cried, wildly.

"Who?" queried Hawkstone, in a frigid tone.

"How can you ask that, sir?" panted Ravenel. "Do you want to drive me insane? I mean Mademoiselle Zephyr."

"Yes, she is likely to live, so far as I can see," answered Hawkstone, dryly. "Poor fool! take my advice, and do not waste your heart on that little fiend!"

And he passed out 'twixt the gray canvas walls, and walked away through the moonlit night.

CHAPTER XVII.

JETTA SPEAKS AGAIN.

"My dear Jetta," Mrs. Otway was saying in an anxious voice, "if that mad Vincent torments you further, I shall feel it my duty to write to his cousin and lay the case before *him*. For Bee's sake, I cannot allow him to drive you from the island."

It was after lessons, and she had climbed up to the schoolroom, and there, by direct questions, won from me the story of my troubles with Vincent Hawkstone. Bee, perched on a stool at the far end of the room, was watch-

ing through a glass a fleet of fishing-boats flitting, dream-like, around a point of the island.

"His infatuation for you is *very* unfortunate," sighed Mrs. Otway, "for he is reckless, ungovernable—he stops at nothing. But courage, my dear; you are under my protection, and I shall take care that no harm comes to you. If you talk again of leaving the island you will break all our hearts——"

Bee dashed down the glass, sprang off her stool, and cast herself on my breast.

"*I* will write to papa!" she declared, "and tell him all the wicked things that Vincent said to you in the graveyard, Miss Ravenel. You shall never leave the island unless you take me with you. I love you so well, that I couldn't stay here—no, I couldn't," piteously, "if you went away!"

"Miss Bee," said Mrs. Otway, severely, "it is not good for little pitchers to have such big ears."

But the poor child was sobbing about my neck, and I hastened to soothe her with such promises as I could conscientiously make.

"I will not leave the island, Bee, so long as it is possible for me to remain here," I said. And then I put away my books, and we descended to the garden, and sat down together by the ancient sun-dials. The afternoon sun lay fierce and sultry on the sea. Beds of velvety carnations and spotted lilies filled the air with odors, the hot whirr of locusts sounded in the grass. Bee began to talk of a schooner which had once been wrecked on the beach below the old seawall. I was listening dreamily when the horseshoe gate creaked. I heard a step, I looked up, and saw a woman standing at my shoulder, staring in a curious, intent way at little Bee.

She was dressed in a red cotton gown, with a handkerchief of the same material knotted over her black hair. Her face and hands were as brown as a nut. She wore huge gold hoops in her ears, and carried a string of wicker baskets.

"Pretty lady," she began, in a soft, wheedling tone, "buy something for the little one, and help a poor

gypsy. I've come all the way from Whithaven to sell my wares."

"How in the world did you get here?" I cried, involuntarily. "Persons like you do not find access to the island an easy matter."

"I begged a fisherman to take me in his boat, lady," answered the gypsy, meekly. "I've baskets to sell and fortunes to tell. Let me see your hand. Ah, how white it is—how lovely! I ought to find good luck in its lines."

I drew quickly back.

"I have no wish to hear my fortune," I answered, coldly, "and if you want to dispose of your baskets, you had better go to the housekeeper's room in the rear of the Hall."

She flashed me a strange glance. Being naturally observant, I saw that her eyes were of a soft violet color, and that they contrasted oddly with her nut-brown skin and raven hair.

"Then, you won't let the gypsy read your fortune, lady?" she whined. "Well, I can tell you something without looking at your hand. This island is an evil place for you. You are in great peril here. Be warned in time—get away as soon as you can!"

She detached a tiny basket from her neck and held it out to Bee, who was staring at the *bizarre* creature with wide eyes.

"Take it," she coaxed, softly, "and show me the way to the housekeeper, little one. Is this pretty lady your mother?"

"No," answered Bee; "I have no mother."

She limped out into the walk without waiting for any sign either of assent or dissent from me.

"I am lame," she said to the gypsy; "I cannot go very fast."

The woman nodded.

"Yes, I know, little dear! Somebody dropped you long ago, and you never were the same after it. Don't hurry for me."

They vanished around a corner of the stone porch.

Assailed by a sudden premonition of danger, I leaped to my feet.

"Come back, Bee!" I shouted, and flew after them, stumbling over the string of baskets which the gypsy had thrown down in the first turn of the path. I looked and saw a red gown disappearing down the wooded terrace. Fear lent me wings. Swift as she was, I was swifter. I grasped the cotton dress, and as I did so, I saw that she was clasping Bee in a suffocating embrace, and that one hand was pressed tight upon the little helpless mouth.

"Stop!" I commanded. "What are you doing with that child?"

"I am taking her away!" she hissed. "Don't attempt to interfere. She is mine—my own flesh and blood, Jetta Ravenel!"

And then I knew who this basket-vender was.

"I *must* interfere," I said, "for she is in my charge—I am answerable for her safety. You cannot go a step further. Give her back to me at once. See! you are choking her cruelly!" Then I raised a loud cry of "Help! help!" which I knew would be heard by some of the workmen always at hand. She struggled to free herself, but I held the red skirts like a vise.

"Let go, you serpent!" panted my blue-eyed gypsy, and out from her bosom flashed a long, sharp blade, like a stiletto. She tried to strike at me, but I snatched the weapon from her, and threw it into the shrubbery. We could hear feet running down the terrace.

"I will never forgive you for this!" hissed the gypsy. "A moment ago I told you that you were in danger on the island—you shall see that I spoke truly. Well, take the child now, but there will come another time and another chance, and then—then look to yourself, Jetta Ravenel!"

She dropped Bee and fled, just as Harris and the assistant gardener appeared at my side.

"Don't pursue her, Harris!" I cried, incoherently; "don't try to overtake her!" And I seized Bee and ran to the house, where I told my story to Mrs. Otway.

"You must go over to Whithaven, Harris," she said to the overseer, "and telegraph the affair to Basil Hawkstone. He ought to know of it before he starts for Egypt. This first attempt to abduct the child may be followed by others."

Harris departed on his errand, and the outcome of the whole matter was this: The next day the lord of Tempest Island, after an absence of six years, returned again to his sea-girt kingdom.

Bee had been sent to bed. The hour was waxing late. I sat in my own room adjoining the nursery, reading the "Idyls of the King," when a servant rapped at the door.

"Mr. Hawkstone has come, Miss Ravenel," she announced, "and Mrs. Otway says will you please step down-stairs?"

I arose at once. It was Bee's birthnight, and in her honor I had donned one of the few smart gowns which I possessed — a trailing, white wool, embroidered in pale roses, and clasped at the waist with an antique silver girdle. A silver dagger pinned the coils of my tar-black hair, and I still wore in my corsage an opulent cluster of jacqueminot roses which Bee had placed there at dinner. It was a wild night, with an east wind blowing, and the rain sweeping in torrents by the windows. Mrs. Otway had lighted a wood fire in the hall, and the two were standing before it as I descended the shallow stair. Basil Hawkstone turned and looked up at me. I, quite as curious, looked down at him. Yes, it was the same person that I had seen on the beach at Peg's Inlet. There was the face, carved as if from stone, the scar on the cheek, the eyes of hard, cold, iron-gray, the bronzed, soldierly look. One hand seemed to be injured—he wore it in a sling. As I approached the fire he made me a profound bow, and Mrs. Otway said, simply:

"Surely you two remember each other. I have sent for you, Miss Ravenel, to tell Mr. Hawkstone the story of yesterday. As you were the heroine of the affair, he wants to hear it from your lips."

"I am no heroine," I protested, and briefly related the incident of the previous day.

Hawkstone leaned against the mantel, and moved his injured hand as though in pain.

"Pray sit down, sir," urged Mrs. Otway; "you are hurt."

"I met with a slight accident a few nights ago," he answered; "it is nothing—don't mind me. I know not which to admire more in this precious business"—and he gave an unpleasant laugh—"the effrontery of the basket-vender, or Miss Ravenel's prompt and courageous action. One thing is certain—you did well to telegraph to me, Mrs. Otway. To-morrow I should have been on the sea. Now"—he took a turn across the hearth—"it is necessary to change all my plans." Then, stopping suddenly, he looked at me in a way that took my breath. "It seems that my cousin Vincent has, for once, made a wise choice. Shall I congratulate you, Miss Ravenel, upon your prospective entrance into a family whose closets abound in skeletons? I scarcely think I ought. The past records of the house prove that I should not. There is a curse upon us, and it seems to fall heaviest upon the women who take the Hawkstone name."

I felt the blood rise to my face.

"You are laboring under some mistake," I said, haughtily. "Who has dared to tell you that your cousin is—is anything to me?"

He stared.

"No less a person than Vincent himself."

"It is a falsehood," I said, dryly; "you have been well duped."

"What! Are you not about to marry that boy?" he demanded, sharply.

"Certainly not—emphatically not!"

He looked thoroughly annoyed.

"I beg a thousand pardons, Miss Ravenel. Ah!"—under his breath—"it is the same old Vincent!" Then he turned to his housekeeper: "Mrs. Otway, has my cousin been much at the island of late?"

"Yes, sir; every day in the week since Miss Ravenel came. He has tormented her a great deal, and, sir," speaking hurriedly, as though she did not mean to miss

her opportunity, "if something is not done about it, I am sure we shall lose her, which will break Miss Bee's heart."

He gave me a lightning glance. I bore it steadily, determined, first of all, to escape from the false position in which Vincent Hawkstone had placed me.

"It is quite true," I said, in a firm voice; "if your cousin is permitted to annoy me further, I cannot remain at Tempest Island."

He bent his brows in an unpleasant way.

"Be at ease, Miss Ravenel. I will see that Vincent is properly suppressed. He shall trouble you no more. You are, or have been, a ward of mine, remember. I promised my stepmother to look after your welfare—in future I shall certainly do so."

"You are very kind," I answered, coldly, "but I have reached an age when I no longer need a guardian."

"I think you err," he replied; "you need one now more than ever before!"

I crept back to my own room, taking with me the memory of his formidable eyes and authoritative manner. My sleep that night was troubled and fitful. When I descended to breakfast next morning Basil Hawkstone was walking on the porch with his daughter.

"Oh!" cried Bee, wild with delight at the sudden appearance of her father, "come and see my papa, Miss Ravenel. I want you to love him as I do. You *must* love papa, for my sake."

"What an irrational and enormous demand!" answered Hawkstone. "Let us go in to breakfast. The mail has arrived, Miss Ravenel. You will find your portion of it on the hall-table."

There were several letters from former schoolmates, and one from my brother Gabriel, brief and mysterious.

"Meet me at sunset to-night on the shore at Peg Patton's Inlet"—it said—"and be secret and silent about it. Bring your pupil, Beatrice Hawkstone, with you. Will explain everything at the meeting. Fail on no account to fetch the child, as much—very much depends upon my seeing her. I am in a sore strait—I need your sisterly counsel. In God's name, bring the child!"

This letter filled me with amazement. What did Gabriel want—what *could* he want with little Bee? How I got through that breakfast I do not know. Hawkstone talked mostly to Mrs. Otway.

"I have sent to New York for my traps," I heard him say. "I shall not go abroad again. I see that I am needed at Tempest Island more than at Cairo. For years this old Hall has been like a tomb. Engage an extra corps of servants, and open all the vacant rooms. In a week or two I shall fill them with guests."

We were just rising from table when a step sounded on the porch, and Vincent Hawkstone pushed back the door of the breakfast-room, and stood before us. At sight of his cousin he recoiled, changing color violently.

"Heaven above! Prince Lucifer," he stammered. "*You* here—at Tempest Island!"

Hawkstone laid his sound hand on the intruder's shoulder.

"Come into the library, boy," he commanded, sternly. "I have something to say to you."

Vincent flashed me a fierce, questioning glance. I felt my cheeks burn. They vanished across the hall. I remained behind in the breakfast-room with Bee and Mrs. Otway. The mist hung thick on the terraces and over the salt, cold sea. It was a gloomy, mutinous morning. Presently Vincent Hawkstone pushed back the door again, and came quickly to my side. His eyes were like a dull fire under his angry brows.

"Well," he said, in a thick voice, "I have received orders to speak to you no more of marriage. I am not to urge my suit any more—ha! ha! Perhaps he expects me to leave the field to himself. He abhors matrimony, but in a week he will be madly in love with you. Oh, you need not frown. His divorced wife fainted in the circus-ring at sight of him, two or three nights ago, and then tried to spoil his manly beauty with a bottle of vitriol. I wish to Heaven she had succeeded! Did you ask him why he carries his hand in a sling? Oh, you will have plenty of excitement at the island if my presentiments are true. But know this, Jetta—I shall *not*

leave you to any other man; I shall *not* cease to importune you for your love; I never—never will give you up! You are mine, and woe to the person who dares come between us!"

Before I could utter a word he was out through the porch and down the dripping terrace. I flew to the schoolroom with Bee, glad to hide myself there—glad to bury my thoughts in the child's books. From the window I saw Basil Hawkstone mount his horse and ride off across the island with Harris. He looked up once to the schoolroom, but made no sign, though Bee kissed her tiny hand to him and nodded her curly head. The whole island seems electrified by his unexpected arrival. Tempest Hall is full of unwonted bustle. The workpeople outside wear happy faces. Everybody rejoices that he has returned to his own at last.

He was agreeable enough at dinner—told us droll stories of Arab life, and talked of the land of the Pharaohs, till I seemed to be standing, myself, at hundred-gated Thebes, and peering into the tombs of Bîbân-el-Mulouk, and listening to the muezzin calling the faithful in the bazaars of Luxor. He was very kind, too, to his adoring little daughter; but when she begged for a half-holiday that she might follow him about the island, he answered, coldly:

"No, it is best for you to be in the schoolroom with Miss Ravenel—you will find her a far more profitable companion than I can be."

So the lessons went on through the afternoon. At the usual hour I put away my books, left Bee to the care of Mrs. Otway, and set my face toward Peg's Inlet and —Gabriel.

Why he had chosen that dreary, distant spot for an interview I could not imagine. Twilight was already gathering as I crossed the dunes; the raw, cold fog still clung to shore and sea. All was silence and desolation at the Inlet. A solitary white crane flashed out of the sedge, and sailed away on ghostly wings into the forest. At the same moment I saw Gabriel coming toward me over the wet rocks. He wore a dreadnaught

coat and a soft slouched hat, and he looked pale and haggard.

"Where is the child?" was his first question.

"At home, of course," I answered; "surely, Gabriel, you did not think I would fetch her here? Why did you ask such an odd thing of me?"

To my surprise, he flew into a towering passion.

"You simpleton!" he cried; "you absurd little idiot! I told you to bring the child. In the name of all the fiends, why didn't you do it? Go back at once to that trumpery Hall, and get her—go, without a moment's delay!"

I recoiled a step, scarcely recognizing him in that mood.

"I shall do nothing of the kind, Gabriel. At present it is not thought wise to take the child beyond the gates. An attempt was lately made to abduct her. What does all this mystery mean, and, pray, what can *you* want with Bee?"

He came close to me and took my hands—his own were as hot as fire.

"Good God! Jetta, my whole happiness — yes, my very life—depends upon—— Hark! was that a footstep? Are you alone? utterly alone?"

"Certainly. You hear only the water. How pale you are, Gabriel! how strange you look! Why did you not come up to the Hall? I am sure my brother would be welcome there."

"Basil Hawkstone has returned for good, has he not?"

"Yes."

"Curse him! Jetta, in one of my letters I told you that I loved an angel—do you remember? Oh, Heaven! I have no words to tell how I love her!"—his voice growing thick and incoherent. "At the bare thought of her my head swims, my heart seems to stop beating. She is an angel, wronged and suffering. I have sworn to help her, and I shall keep my oath. In no other way can I hope to win her love."

"Have you broken your engagement with Miss Rokewood?" I asked.

"Don't mention Miss Rokewood," he cried, wildly. "or you will drive me mad? Would you have me marry a woman for whom I care nothing?"

"Gabriel, who is your wronged and suffering angel? You have not yet told me her name."

"Who is she? My lily, my white queen, my pearl—"

"But her *real* name, Gabriel? And what is the connection betwixt your infatuation for her and the bringing of little Bee Hawkstone to Peg's Inlet on this wet and dreary night?"

He looked baffled, embarrassed.

"How logical you grow!" he sneered. "I do not know whether to trust you or not, Jetta—you look dangerous. Do you love me well enough to keep my secret—well enough to help me to be happy? You are in the house of that brute; you might betray me unintentionally——"

The truth broke upon me. I looked him steadily in the eyes.

"Gabriel, your angel is Basil Hawkstone's divorced wife—the circus-rider."

He gave a violent start.

"Well, what then? She is a free woman, and so lovely that she shines above all her sex like the moon above stars——"

"You need not tell me about her beauty, Gabriel. I have seen her," I sobbed. The beach was growing wild and dark with storm and twilight, and I felt wretched and disheartened. "It was she who instigated you to write the letter which I received this morning. You bade me bring Bee to this beach to-night that you might seize the child and take her forcibly from me. Was such a trick worthy of you, Gabriel? Does it speak well for the quality of the passion that woman has inspired?"

He ground his teeth.

"Deuce take your questions! Will you bring the child here to-morrow at this hour—Yes or No?"

"No!—a thousand times No!"

With an oath he caught me by the shoulder and shook me furiously—indeed, I think he meant to annihilate me

then and there. But at that moment a wild, blood-curdling cry rang suddenly across the misty beach—an awful, an agonized cry—a cry fit to raise the hair on one's head.

"The deuce!" cried Gabriel. "What is that?"

Something flashed by us in the gathering dark—a white, spectral figure, with a face like the shrouded dead. I saw a cloud of pale, flying hair, and a pair of outstretched arms, beating the air in a wild, aimless fashion. Gabriel's hand fell from my shoulder.

"Great God!" he muttered, and turned and dashed off at the top of his speed.

Thus deserted, I fled in a contrary direction, without a single backward look. With ears still tingling to the echo of that ghostly scream, I scurried across the desolate dunes, across the wastes of lonesome beach, back to the shelter and safety of Tempest Hall.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CIRCE.

In a private parlor of the most elegant hotel in Whithaven, Mademoiselle Zephyr, the famous young equestrienne, lay curled up in a deep *fauteuil*, with her cheek pressed, like a day lily, against the dull, soft blue of the chair.

She wore a trailing tea-gown of delicate faille, garnished with exquisite lace. Her little head was rough with a mass of gathered yellow curls that no pins seemed quite able to confine. She looked unspeakably fair and pensive, unspeakably childlike and innocent—not in the least like a woman who could throw vitriol or play the hypocrite. Against the wall near her leaned a man, with his hands buried in his pockets, and his eyes fixed attentively on the young rider.

"So you've broken your engagement, ma'm'zell?" he said, quietly. "You're bound not to ride any more at present? What new whim is this?"

In the rich folds of her tea-gown nestled a tiny lap-dog,

wearing a collar of silver bells. She stroked him with snowflake fingers, weighed down with diamond rings, and answered :

"How can you ask, you stupid old Jasper ? Did I not fall in the ring a few nights ago, and sustain injuries that were thought, at first, to be fatal ? I am too ill to ride for weeks, perhaps months, to come. Do I not look ill, Jasper ?"

Jasper Hatton's shrewd eyes rested for a moment on the exquisite figure, on the dazzling face, in its halo of yellow hair, and he shrugged his square shoulders expressively.

"Not in the least, ma'm'zell."

"Well," she pouted, "let me then say that I do not want to leave Whithaven just now, Jasper ; that I have particular business in this vicinity. Cannot you understand ? I abandon my dear *cirque ;* I drive the manager mad with disappointment ; I throw money to the winds ; I quarrel with everybody, and swear that I am disabled, dying, all for the privilege of remaining a few days longer in a horrid Yankee town where, under ordinary circumstances, life would be quite unendurable."

Mr. Hatton smiled grimly. He was still flashy in regard to pantaloons, and loud as to neckties. His eyes were still small and black and all alert, and his manners suggestive of the stable-yard.

"You had a rattling fight with the manager, did you ? Yes, yes, I understand it all, Zephyr, and I wonder at you ! You've carried the world by storm ; you've made your pile, as these blamed Yankees say—in short, you've had your fling without hindrance ; now, what more can you want ?"

She set her little white teeth.

"I want *revenge*, Jasper—I've had everything but that."

"Pooh ! why bother yourself further about Basil Hawkstone ? You threw him over long ago ; you're free of him and he of you. What made you faint at sight of him the other night ? Faugh ! I thought you had more pluck, ma'm'zell !"

The jeweled hand that caressed the lap-dog trembled.

"Jasper, she said, sweetly, "you are dull, you are heavy, you are often exasperating; but I have always got on better with you than with other men, because you never thwart or worry me, you let me have my own way in all things—that is why we remain friends. Now tell me, am I still beautiful? Do you see any crows'-feet about my eyes, any gray in my hair? Am I fading? Have I lost, in the smallest degree, my power to charm?"

The square-shouldered Englishman surveyed her with a curious sidelong look.

"Your beauty, ma'm'zell, is as it always was—without a flaw; and it's good, I should say, for a professional wear and tear of ten more years, at least—women like you age slowly."

"Well, you see what I am, Jasper—you know how I have been adored in all lands. I cast myself at that man's feet—I implored him to love me again, and he repulsed me with scorn. Do you wonder that I tried to throw vitriol in the face that mocked me? Do you wonder that I vowed to be revenged, and that I mean to keep that vow at any cost?"

Mr. Hatton shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't know how any man living could repulse you, Zephyr—he must be something more than human. As for the vitriol business, my little lady, you look like a saint—a right down angel, minus the wings, but I always knew you had the very deuce of a temper. Did you go down to Tempest Island, a day or two ago, to finish the work begun in the *cirque?*"

She laughed.

"How do you know that I have been down to the island? Don't watch me too closely, Jasper, or I shall hate you, as I do the rest of your kind."

"Somebody has got to watch you," he answered, sulkily; "God knows you need it—and I am the man for the work. You may quarrel with me as much as you like—you cannot shake me off. I'm not like the others, as you ought to know."

"I went down to Tempest Island to see my child, [illegible]r—to take her away; but another woman foiled me —the Ravenel girl. But for her, I should have succeeded. I carried a stiletto with me—I tried to use it, too; but she was was like a lioness—I found myself disarmed at once. Jasper, I swear to you that I must get possession of Bee—I must tear her from Basil Hawkstone, or die!"

Hatton whistled, softly.

"So the little kid just escaped the clutches of her fond mamma, eh? Lucky for her, say I! How long would you be bothered with a lame brat like that? The maternal instinct was never developed in you, Zephyr. Humph! What's the Ravenel girl like?"

"An Eastern princess—a Cleopatra!" answered mademoiselle, with a short, mirthless laugh; "she is far handsomer than I am, Jasper. My white-and-gold prettiness is totally eclipsed by her rich Southern tints. I have just received news that Basil Hawkstone has given up all thought of going abroad again—that he has gone down to his island to stay indefinitely. I wonder if that girl's handsome face has anything to do with his sudden change of plans?"

"And you mean to stay here in Whithaven and watch him? you, who might be winning new laurels and new lovers in a score of new places?"

"I want no more lovers," she answered, wearily. "There was a time when it was pleasure to pick up their hothouse bouquets, and find hidden therein the bracelet of diamonds, or the brooch of black pearls, or the necklace, which meant financial embarrassment to the foolish giver; but now I am sick of all that. Conquest has become 'flat, stale and unprofitable' to me. I want revenge, I tell you! I am the deadly foe of that Ravenel girl; I would stop at nothing to crush her; I am Hawkstone's deadly foe—in fact, Jasper, I would rather do mischief just now than win any number of fresh laurels."

A rap at the door. Mademoiselle Zephyr called, "Come in," and a servant entered, bearing a card.

She glanced at the name thereon, and started slightly.

"Show him up," she commanded, then turned to Jasper. "A visitor is coming," she said; "get under the sofa."

"My legs are too long!" answered Hatton, dryly.

"Then go behind that curtain yonder. He must not see you here."

"Plague take your whimsies!" muttered Hatton; but he disappeared behind the curtain, and mademoiselle fell back in her chair, a vision of pale, languid beauty, just as the door opened again, and Vincent Hawkstone entered.

"I heard that you were ill at this hotel," he began, airily, "and I was seized with a burning desire to pay my respects to you, Mrs. Hawkstone — confound it! I mean Mademoiselle Zephyr!"

She looked at him suspiciously.

"Did your cousin send you here?" she asked.

"Certainly not. Prince Lucifer would never choose *me* for an ambassador. He doesn't like me well enough, you know."

She held out her hand with a dawning smile.

"I remember! Are you two as hostile to each other as of old?"

"We are sworn foes, mademoiselle, and time only widens the breach between us."

"How delightful! I dare say you are still a poor dependent upon Basil's bounty?"

"Unfortunately, yes."

Her blue eyes sparkled, her little teeth shone through her parted lips.

"I see! There's a bond of sympathy between us! I may regard you as an ally, may I not?"

"Regard me as a person anxious and ready to injure Prince Lucifer in any way possible."

"Ah," she meditated, gravely, "you hate him, Vincent, and you love that Southern beauty, Jetta Ravenel, the governess at Tempest Island! Unhappily, she does *not* love you, and Prince Lucifer has cruelly forbidden you to urge your suit further. Is it not so?"

He colored.

"How did you learn all this? You have spies out, I perceive. Well, I too, can state a fact. You went over to Tempest recently, and played the gypsy with great success, you versatile creature; but you didn't get possession of Bee!"

"A Roland for my Oliver!" she cried, gayly. "Go on, Cousin Vincent!"

He pulled his red-gold mustaches.

"I am going to marry Miss Ravenel—how, I do not know; but I *shall* marry her, and to accomplish that purpose I would summon help, if I could, from the bottomless pit! I need you, mademoiselle; you have ends to gain at Tempest Island, and you also need me."

She arose from the *fauteuil* and stood before him, her faille gown and soft laces trailing, her yellow hair shining, her eyes brilliant with excitement.

"To sigh for help from the bottomless pit in one breath, and appeal to me for it in another, is scarcely complimentary," she laughed, "but I forgive you, Vincent. Here is my hand—I think we can work together."

"We can, and we will!" he said, and raised the white fingers to his lips, just as another rap echoed on the door. Again the waiter appeared, and again he carried a card in his hand.

Mademoiselle glanced at it and colored faintly.

"You must go now," she said to Vincent; "to-morrow, at this same hour, you may come again."

Scarcely had the door closed upon him, when mademoiselle danced a few steps toward the curtain at the other end of the room, and then paused with finger on lip.

"Are you there, you dear dull old Jasper?" she called, softly.

"I am here," growled Hatton, from behind the screening folds.

"Keep very quiet now, for a lover is coming to woo. You must quite erase yourself—above all, don't listen to the love passages, for those things make you absurdly angry."

"Zephyr," said Hatton, in a smothered voice, "how long will you try my patience?"

"For years and years, I dare say," she laughed. "Hush! He is here!" And she had just fallen back in the deep chair in a state of interesting collapse, when Gabriel Ravenel, handsome as a young Antinous, stood before her.

"Have you brought my child?" she said, turning upon him her large, melting eyes.

Pale, crestfallen, he leaned against a table by her side, and looked down into her maddening little face.

"Forgive me!" he groaned; "our scheme failed, Vera. My sister—confound her!—met me last night at the Inlet, in answer to my letter, but she did not fetch the child—she suspects mischief."

Mademoiselle's blue eyes flashed.

"Oh, does she, indeed? But for her, I should be holding Bee in my empty arms at this very moment. She suspects you, her brother?—she knows, perhaps, that you are my friend?"

"Your lover!" he corrected.

"Did you tell her, stupid?" she blazed.

"No, she guessed the truth."

He was haggard with disappointment and chagrin. The beautiful circus-rider had never held in her toils a more helpless victim than this young Southerner with great expectations—this raven-haired Apollo, who, betrothed to one woman, was spending all his spare time and money in making love to another.

"It is plain that we shall receive no help, directly or indirectly, from Jetta," he muttered.

She put on a grieved air.

"Ah," she sighed, "your sister always hated me—she now begrudges me your friendship, and I have so few friends, too!" clasping her little hands pathetically. Hatton, behind, the curtain, indulged in a curious smile. "She will not help us, then?—you cannot coax, persuade, or threaten her?"

"No! she is painfully loyal to the Hawkstones—deuce take her! Better not count on Jetta!"

The ready tears began to roll softly down her face.

"Fate is against me!" she sobbed. "All my plans go awry! Basil Hawkstone triumphs over me at every turn."

Her emotion was too much for Ravenel. Instantly he was on his knees before her, covering her hands with hot kisses.

"Do not weep!" he implored, wildly; "it kills me to see your tears! Have you no friends? Look at *me;* I would die for you gladly. If that silly Jetta dares to stand in your way I will crush her without mercy. What is a sister compared with *you?* I love you, Vera; I love you, and you know it, and yet you return no answer to the devotion I offer you. You prolong my suspense cruelly; you seem to reject even while you accept my service. Why do you hold me so long in abeyance? Why are you so cold, so pitiless to me?"

She drew her little hands gently from his grasp. With her pale, tear-wet cheek and innocent eyes she looked, indeed, like a suffering angel.

"Gabriel," she answered, softly, "you must not talk like this to me till you bring my child. I will listen to no love-making till I hold my little one to my heart—till you prove your devotion by accomplishing the task to which I have set you. Your reward does not precede the service—it follows it. If you really love me, Gabriel, you will help me, first of all, to take vengeance on my foes."

Vengeance is an ugly word, but it slipped sweetly over her red lips, and Gabriel Ravenel's dark eyes flashed. Her touch, her look, her vague promises, sent the blood racing, like liquid fire, through his veins.

"And if I bring your child?" he cried. "Oh, my beautiful sorceress, if I tear her from Hawkstone's very arms—if I make common cause with you against that man—if I do your bidding in all things—if I fling all things away for your sweet sake—will you listen to me *then?* Will you accept my love then? Will you swear to be my wife? Thus far you have fed me on husks. I must have your sacred promise, Vera, before I undertake more."

Verily, he was a willing tool in her hands! Like the wary little spider that she was, she glanced once toward the curtain, and finding everything quiet there, she bent forward till her yellow curls touched Ravenel's shoulder, and said:

"As surely as you tear my darling from Hawkstone, and bring her safely to me; as surely as you help me to torment, yes, and if possible, *destroy*, him, so surely will I accept your love and become your wife!"

There was certainly a movement behind the curtain *now*, but Ravenel did not hear it—the voice of the siren had drowned all other sounds in his ear.

"Vera, I am yours, body and soul. My darling, oh, my darling——"

"Hush!" she interrupted. "I cannot listen to you till your work is done, remember. You failed last night—you may fail again. I shall exact complete success before I make payment. And now you must go, Gabriel. I am ill to-day, my troubles have quite prostrated me—I wish to rest."

"Go! I have but just come," he answered, reproachfully. "How cruel you are! Will you not permit me to remain a few moments at least?"

"Not to-day, dear friend," purred Vera; "I wish to be alone. Ah, I fear I shall yet involve you in no end of trouble with that dreadful rich old man, whose heir you are to be. Does he never ask what it is that takes you from him so often?"

Ravenel hung his head—that handsome, foolish head which an artful woman had completely turned.

"Yes," he acknowledged, sullenly; "and I am tired of inventing excuses. He thinks I go to Tempest Island to see my sister."

"Very good. And the blonde heiress to whom you are betrothed—what does *she* think?"

"I do not know—I do not care!—probably she suspects the truth—I cannot conceal it longer. The *rôle* of hypocrite is growing distasteful to me, Vera. I must cancel my engagement with Miss Rokewood!"

"Do nothing rash, you tiresome boy!" she yawned.

"If you break with Miss Rokewood, you will surely invite a crisis in your affairs."

"What, then," he queried, wildly, "would you throw me over, Vera, if old Sutton should blot my name from his will?"

"It is better to be rich than poor," she answered, evasively. "I adore wealth myself, and all that wealth brings."

Perhaps he detected a false ring in her tone—he looked at her sharply.

"Vera"—and his voice grew hoarse with passion—"if the day ever comes when I find that you have deceived me—when you dare to break your solemn promise—mark you, it will be time for one or both of us to die!"

She drew back, growing pale and uncomfortable.

"How can you say such dreadful things?" she answered, petulantly. "I wish you were not such a firebrand! There! you may kiss my hand; and now farewell—I positively cannot endure you longer."

He pressed his lips to her jeweled fingers, to her dress, to one loose tress of her hair; then he went, and Jasper Hatton flung back the curtain, and stalked, grim as Fate, out of his hiding-place.

"Do you mean to destroy that young idiot?" he demanded, sternly. "Come, Zephyr, I tell you frankly, I don't like this!"

She laughed softly, defiantly.

"Yesterday, Jasper, that young idiot, as you truthfully call him, sent me a bracelet of emeralds, every stone as big as the eye of a sea-god. And the day previous, his offering at the shrine of my beauty was a fan of ostrich feathers, a half-yard long, mounted on sticks of solid amber, incrusted with diamonds. Ha! ha! I am a terrible creature, am I not, and you are dreadfully angry with me, eh?"

He looked at her from under bent brows.

"By my soul! I wish the simpleton knew you as well as I do, mademoiselle! whither are you leading him? You have the face of an angel, you carry all hearts by

storm, and at bottom you are nothing more nor less than a little fiend!"

CHAPTER XIX.

DISHONORED.

"DEADLY dull day! Nobody on the avenues—life at a standstill! Hope to Heaven old Hypo won't persist in burying his household much longer at Newport. For my part, I find the place detestable."

Doris Rokewood opened a pair of fearless blue eyes.

"Newport detestable?—Newport dull? What has come over you, Gabriel, that you can say such things? You have a diseased mind, I am sure, that ought to be administered unto, and at once."

She was what is called a fine girl—tall, fair, with plenty of firm muscles and healthy white flesh. She had shot game in the Adirondacks, she could fence and ride and row; she loved yachting and lawn-tennis, and her especial pets were dogs and horses, and an ugly monkey full of mischievous tricks. An heiress, too, was Miss Rokewood, adored by her guardian, feared by some young men, admired by others, and betrothed to George Sutton's handsome secretary and heir-presumptive, Gabriel Ravenel.

The two were standing in the drawing-room of Sutton's Newport house—called a cottage, but, in point of fact, a palace. Outside, the rain fell vehemently. Bellevue and Ocean Avenues were deserted. The wilderness of costly plants on the deep piazza glistened with wet. Gabriel Ravenel, with a vexed and depressed countenance, stared out into the gloomy day without seeing it.

"One would suppose," said Miss Rokewood, as she toyed with some cream-white lilies in a red porcelain vase, "that you would find any place or any day delightful, Gabriel, so long as we two were together!"

He bit his lip.

"Of course," he muttered; "oh, certainly!"

A noise at the door—it opened, and in pranced Miss Rokewood's pet monkey, Juno, who knew the trick of turning knobs without human aid. The creature was

one of the ugliest of its kind, tricked out in a little cap and jacket of scarlet silk, and a short skirt of spangled gauze. It saluted Ravenel and its mistress with ludicrous gravity, cut a pirouette, and bowed again to Gabriel—kept on bowing and bowing, in fact, with satirical deference.

"How can you tolerate that wretched little beast, Doris?" cried Ravenel, in a disgusted tone; "and why, in Heaven's name, do you bedizen it in that abominable manner?"

"Is it possible that you do not like Juno's costume?" answered Doris Rokewood, innocently. "I fancied you would find it to your taste. I am fond of Juno because she was sent to me from Cairo by a particular friend of guardy's—a Mr. Hawkstone, who has been a great wanderer, and who owns some island not far from the coast. Why, how you *glare* at me! You know Mr. Hawkstone, perhaps?"

"Not any," answered Ravenel, savagely. "I have heard of him, however."

"Of course! how stupid of me! Your sister is living at Tempest Island; you go there often of late."

He colored to his eyes.

"The girl of the period has strange tastes," he sneered. "One can overlook your dogs and horses, Doris, but this African simian is too much for ordinary forbearance."

In a bantering tone she answered:

"If you loved me, Gabriel, you would not quarrel with my tastes."

"Does that follow?" he said, captiously. "Bah! turn the vile caricature out, Doris? I call this an execrable jest quite unworthy of a lady. You had some particular person in mind when you put that toggery on the beast."

"*Whom* could I have had in mind?" asked Miss Rokewood, calmly caressing the monkey. "You are growing incoherent, are you not? Poor Juno! I am sure your hard names have lacerated her feelings, and she is so amiable, so intelligent, too!"

Her manner changed suddenly: she turned and swept

straight up to her lover. Her height was nearly equal to his own, and she looked like a daughter of the old sea-kings, with her resolute blue eyes, and crown of flax-colored hair.

"Gabriel, I feel sure that you have something to say to me."

Her engagement was a month old. The time had not been happy or satisfactory. From the first something intangible had stood, a separating force, betwixt herself and her lover. Ravenel gave a guilty start, then he braced himself for the crisis.

"Give me back my freedom, Doris!" he said.

She grew pale, but answered, steadily:

"You love another woman?"

"Yes. It was all a—a—mistake from the first—our engagement, I mean."

She drew his ring from her finger, and put it in his hand.

"You are free, Gabriel!"

An odd mixture of relief and apprehension appeared in his face.

"God knows I would have remained true to you, if I could, Doris, but——"

She interrupted, with cold dignity:

"It is not necessary to enter into explanations. You never cared for me in the least—you thought only of my fortune."

He winced.

"Don't be too hard upon me, Doris—let us remain friends, if we cannot be lovers. I now find myself in a very awkward position. Old Hypo will be furious—he has set his heart on our marriage. Try to soften his wrath against me—you have no end of influence with him, you know."

There was open contempt, not unmixed with bitter pain, in her large frank eyes, as she answered:

"I decline to interfere betwixt you and Mr. Sutton. He has great good sense. He will not be angry because you have sought release from a bond that had become irksome. Why should he, or any other person, wish

our engagement to be kept *now?* Surely you are willing to abide by the choice you have made?"

He frowned, and dropped his ring into his pocket.

"Yes," he answered, sulkily, "I am not ashamed of the woman I love. She is incomparable—the one treasure on earth for me! There goes the luncheon-bell. I suppose we shall be expected to appear before old Hypo as usual."

She looked somewhat unnerved, but she answered:

"Why not? The business of life goes on, whether engagements are broken or kept. Come! Mr. Sutton is quite savage when he is made to wait, and you seem to see the necessity of pleasing, rather than exasperating, him to-day."

He followed her out of the drawing-room, and into another apartment where lunch was spread.

A log fire blazed on the tiled hearth, in merry contrast to the storm outside, and before it stood a delicately molded man, as yellow as a Mongolian, holding a chronometer in his hand.

"You have kept me waiting two and a half minutes," said George Sutton, sharply, as the young pair entered. "For Heaven's sake, shut the door, Ravenel!—I feel a draught across the back of my neck!"

He was a confirmed dyspeptic, unreasonable, like all of his kind—slightly grizzled, with aquiline features and an air of ill health. Two or three of Miss Rokewood's dogs were stretched at his feet—they looked up into his thin, sour face, and wagged their tails affectionately.

"Pardon our unconscionable delay, guardy," said Miss Rokewood, in a cheerful tone—her clear eyes and smiling lips gave no token of the pain that was gnawing her heart. "I am sorry that we have put you out. How is your liver to-day?"

"Barbarous!" growled Sutton. "If a man could manage to exist without that wretched organ, he might be fairly comfortable. My digestion is in a state of absolute ruin. Moreover, this room, I tell you, is full of draughts. I wish I had the architect here—I would punch some fresh ideas into his head."

"I fear you might find the exertion too great for you," smiled Miss Rokewood. "Let me spread a tiger-skin across your lap. How heartless it seems for healthy people to seat themselves at table with a man who sighs for an extinguished liver! Here comes that naughty Juno. Do you think she will annoy you, guardy?"

The monkey had slipped into the room with her mistress.

"Not in the least," answered Sutton, with resignation. "The house is at your disposal, my dear. Transform it into a menagerie—a circus, if you like. Heavens! that draught again! Ravenel, I must trouble you to ring for a muffler -congestion is sure to follow a chill."

The muffler was brought and put on. Juno, who had meandered to the top of a Louis XV. cabinet, instantly gathered her gauze skirt about her hairy throat, and gave a clever cough.

It was a dull luncheon. Ravenel seemed gloomy and distrait. Miss Rokewood alone preserved the appearance of cheerfulness. Presently George Sutton passed a letter to his ward across the damask cloth.

"Here is an invitation," he said, "for you and me to spend a few weeks at Tempest Island with my friend Hawkstone. It seems that he has abandoned the idea of going abroad again, and opened his house to guests. Fancy the flutter which this piece of news will create among managing mammas and marriageable daughters! Of course you remember Hawkstone, my dear?"

She flung a bit of chicken to an English poodle—a favor which brought Juno, chattering angrily, from the cabinet. The monkey gave the canine a blow that sent him yelping under the mahogany. Some slight confusion ensued. When it was over, Miss Rokewood answered, sweetly:

"Yes, I remember him — an Edgar Ravenswood, gloomy and grand, with whom the world had gone ill. He possessed, in a marked degree, that fatal gift of beauty which Byron wrote about."

"Pooh! Do you recollect that he dined with us six years ago, just before setting out on his long exile?"

She nodded.

"And he fascinated me so much that I could only stare at him. In return for my dumb adoration, he sent me Juno from Cairo. Without doubt, his return to the world—our world—will make a stir in society—everybody of any account knows the Hawkstones, of course. But there's a shadow hanging over Prince Lucifer, as I have heard him called—don't you know?"

She spoke very steadily, ignoring the fact that Gabriel Ravenel had rapidly changed countenance at this turn of the conversation.

"That does not signify," answered Sutton; "some people have scruples concerning divorce—others have none. The majority of women will consider the shadow of which you speak rather interesting than otherwise. Shall we accept Hawkstone's invitation?"

"By all means, guardy!"

The invalid cast an irritated look toward Ravenel.

"But here is your betrothed husband—Hawkstone has not asked *him*. What is he to do in your absence, my dear?"

"I could by no possibility accept Mr. Hawkstone's hospitality, sir," cried Ravenel, hotly. "And it is time, I perceive, to tell you that I am no longer Miss Rokewood's betrothed husband—our engagement is over."

Sutton pushed away his plate.

"Why choose the lunch-table for such an explosion as this, sir?" he demanded; "you ought to know that mental disturbance is peculiarly disastrous to the proper action of the liver! Very well. The mischief is done, and cannot be recalled. My dear Doris, leave me alone with Mr. Ravenel. The havoc of my internal economy may as well proceed—yes, take the menagerie with you, my dear." Then, as the door closed on Miss Rokewood and her pets, his angry eyes sought those of his secretary. "I am not in the least surprised, Gabriel," he said, sternly; "I only wonder that Doris has borne with you so long! Your silly infatuation for that circus-rider is in everybody's mouth—is talked of at the clubs, and in private drawing rooms. Deny nothing! I know how you

have followed her about from place to place, whenever it was possible for you to obtain leave of absence from me —I know how you have invited gossip, and ridicule, and notoriety—how you have disgraced us all, sir !"

Ravenel pushed back from the table, white as a sheet.

"It is not my intention to deny anything," he answered, defiantly. "I love the lady known as Mademoiselle Zephyr, and she has promised, upon certain conditions, to become my wife—there's the whole matter for you in a nutshell !"

The Mongolian yellow of Sutton's face turned to wrathful copper-red.

"Idiot ! Can I believe my ears ? You did not wait to throw off the old bonds, before you put on new ones ? And you mean to marry Basil Hawkstone's divorced wife —for, of course, I know who this Mademoiselle Zephyr really is."

"Certainly I mean to marry her if she will have me. Do I not tell you that I love—yes, adore her ?"

The invalid leaned, and laid a thin, delicate hand on the arm of his secretary. His voice grew gentle.

"You are young, Gabriel—a mere boy, and much must be pardoned and overlooked in youthful blood. You are the last of my kindred—the sole heir to my possessions. I have made my will, and given you everything without reservation. I will not be unreasonable, lad—I will not ask you to marry a woman you cannot love—in fact, Doris Rokewood is far too good for you—vastly your superior in everything. It is an unequal bargain—she can do better. I shall not urge any renewal of your late relations -far from it ; but one thing is imperative—you must give up Mademoiselle Zephyr, and at once !"

Ravenel stood leaning on the table, colorless as ashes.

"That I cannot, and will not do !" he answered.

"Then you will leave my house this very hour, to enter it no more ; and not a dollar of my fortune shall you ever see ! Choose betw xt my money and that woman, for, by my soul, you cannot have both ! If you wish to come the Marc Antony business of throwing the world away for love, that is your affair, but the will that

I have made in your favor I will burn before you are an hour older. Think a moment, Gabriel—I would be glad to save you if I could. Is that creature of paint and spangles worth all that you must pay for her?"

Ravenel staggered a little. Wealth—ease—position—these were offered him by one of his own blood—offered eagerly, too, and with genuine feeling in eye and voice. And over against them was set a woman's fair, little face in a frame of yellow hair—a pair of blue eyes, full of delusive lights.

"Love like mine cannot be bought!" he groaned; "to live without her would be a monstrous impossibility—it cannot be thought of for a moment!"

"You will not give her up?" thundered Sutton.

"No!"

"Then, sir, you are no longer heir of mine. I also relieve you from further duty as my secretary. Leave my house, and never enter it again. We are henceforth strangers."

The sword of Damocles had fallen at last! Under the unwelcome stroke he bowed, but his dry lips refused to utter a word.

"Go to my safe and take a quarter's salary," pursued Sutton. "You will need it, for women like Mademoiselle Zephyr have expensive tastes. I have given you without stint since you came to me, but I dare say you have spent everything upon that creature. Farewell, sir! There may be in the world a greater fool than you are, but I have never seen him."

It was over. He had made his choice—thrown away his great expectations—lost his world for love! The blow was none the less bitter because he had expected it. He dashed out of the room. Juno, the monkey, was prancing about the hall in her scarlet jacket and spangled skirt. He gave the poor brute a tremendous kick, then darted into the library, closed the door, but forgot to lock it.

The table was strewn with books and papers. He put these in order, and gathered up such documents as belonged to himself. Empty-handed, disinherited, he

must go! He looked around the library. Across a recess near him a drapery of rich Eastern stuff was drawn; behind this was Sutton's safe, cunningly built into the paneled wall. Ravenel went forward and opened it. The rich invalid was careless about his valuables—his secretary was careless, also. Many things were in the safe which should have been at the banker's—a box crowded with bonds, great rolls of bank-notes—jewels brought from strange lands. And he was to take a quarter's salary and depart! As he stared in upon the treasures, a sharp, ringing suddenly filled Ravenel's ears—mist gathered under his eyelids. An awful temptation shaped itself before him. Instantly he was wrestling with Apollyon—he was overpowered! He snatched the bonds from the box, and thrust the jewels and rolls of money wildly into his pockets. As he did so he heard a noise at his shoulder, and turning, with all his guilt resting consciously upon him, he looked straight into the horrified eyes of George Sutton.

"In God's name, what are you doing?" cried the invalid. "Is it possible that you can stoop to *this*, Ravenel?"

The two men were alone in the room. One was young and strong, the other sick and feeble. Guilt and fear make a merciless combination. Without a word Gabriel struck his benefactor down. Sutton fell to the floor by the rifled safe like one dead. Then Ravenel—madman, traitor, thief—threw up a long window, and with one awful backward look at the pale, blood-stained face lying in the dust, leaped breathlessly out on the piazza, and fled from the house into the stormy, dwindling day—fled, to lay down his life, if need be, even as he had already sacrificed gratitude, honor and fair fame, at the tiny, twinkling feet of Mademoiselle Zephyr, the circus-rider.

CHAPTER XX.

JETTA SPEAKS AGAIN.

SEPTEMBER is reddening the island woods. Nearly three weeks have passed since the night of Hawkstone's return,

and lo! a wonderful change has come to Tempest Island. An army of invaders is in full possession of everything here—stylish, well-dressed invaders, of the best possible manners. They came down upon us "like the wolf on the fold." Our quiet is gone, our peace broken.

"There was never anything like it in *my* time," says Mrs. Otway. "I rejoice that Mr. Hawkstone can find it in his heart to gather these people about him—to look the world in the face again."

The long-closed guest-chambers are flung wide open. Yachts ride in the roadstead. Beautiful society belles and elegant gentlemen lounge in the stone porch and flirt on the terraces. There are gypsy teas and clambakes on the shore, long rides across the island moors on Hawkstone's blooded horses, hunting in the island woods, which abound in game, and dinners of great magnificence. Indeed, life has become one merry-go-round at Tempest Island.

But not for Jetta Ravenel, the governess. I am in the midst of this grand company, but not of them. Bee and I keep mostly to the schoolroom. The child, timid by nature, and made more so by her infirmity, shuns her father's guests almost as much as I do. Vincent Hawkstone is here, thrusting himself upon my notice whenever the opportunity offers, which is not often, for I avoid him studiously.

Vincent has brought friends with him from Whithaven—among them, a Colonel Latimer, who wears an eyeglass and diamond-pin, and has won glory in the tented field, and a blonde young man named Dudley, Vincent's partner in law. Yachtmen are here, and fashionable matrons with fair young charges, a governor, some traveled people, whom Hawkstone met on the Nile, a Whithaven judge with two stylish daughters, a dashing brunette widow from Gotham, named Mrs. Van Dorn, and I know not how many more. Daily Mrs. Otway tells me of new arrivals, but as these people are nothing to me, I find it difficult to remember their names. In the midst of all the festive confusion, I seek only to be left alone with little Bee.

Our schoolroom has old-fashioned windows with deep, cushioned seats. Yesterday, as I sat with my pupil in one of these comfortable nooks, watching the sun sinking behind a headland, the child said :

"Miss Ravenel, a sick gentleman came over in a yacht from Newport last night, with a valet and a young lady. The servants brought him up to the house. He is a particular friend of papa's, and some dreadful thing has lately happened to him—I heard Mrs. Otway say so."

"You should not listen to conversation that is not intended for your ears, Bee," I said.

My pupil paid no heed to this oft repeated rebuke, but continued, unabashed :

"The sick gentleman does not leave his room—he must be *very* bad ; but I saw the young lady walking in the porch with papa this morning. She is tall and fair and she loves dogs. Her name is Doris Rokewood. She was telling papa something, and she was very pale, and she said : 'I felt sure it would be better for Mr. Sutton to come here—at least, it will divert his thoughts from that dreadful matter. Oh, Mr. Hawkstone, he is determined to let justice take its course——' Then papa saw that I was listening, and he sent me away."

Before I could reply the schoolroom-door opened, and Basil Hawkstone entered.

"You have turned hermitess since my guests came, Miss Ravenel," he said, towering grand and tall in the low room.

"I am simply trying to keep out of the way of so many awe-inspiring people," I answered.

He approached our window with an unwonted gentleness in his cold, stern face.

"On close acquaintance you would probably find my guests anything but awe-inspiring. How depressed you look! Has anybody dared to annoy you ?"

I felt the blood leap to my face.

"No ; I am anxious about my—— I mean a near relative—that is all."

"Your brother ?"

"How do you know that ?"

"You have no living relative but a brother. My mother made me acquainted with your history long ago."

I looked him full in his gray eyes.

"Bee has just been telling me that you have a Miss Rokewood among your guests. Is this the lady to whom my brother is engaged?"

He seemed ill at ease.

"Yes. She is here with her guardian; but the engagement is off."

My heart sank.

"And is Gabriel still secretary to Mr. Sutton?" I faltered.

"No," replied Hawkstone, very gravely.

I leaned involuntarily against the window-seat.

"It is even as I feared," I murmured. "My poor, foolish boy! Oh, Mr. Hawkstone, can you tell me where he now is?"

"I cannot!" he answered, in evident embarrassment. "You are no longer in direct communication with him, then?"

I shook my head in a forlorn way.

"Oh, no! Gabriel has not written to me for a long time!"

"My poor child, do not break your heart over him," he began, and then paused abruptly, and changed the conversation. "Miss Ravenel, will you do me the favor to come down to the drawing-room to-night and play for my guests? I sometimes find it difficult to amuse such a company, particularly as I am not a society man."

I was his servant. He had the right to command my time and talents, so I answered, "Certainly!" and he thanked me and went away.

I took tea with Bee in Mrs. Otway's room. Then I saw the child safely in bed, and having dressed myself in plain black, with no ornament save a cluster of tea-roses in my corsage, I descended to the drawing-room.

It was full of people, laughing and talking like magpies. A little hush fell as I entered. Vincent Hawkstone was lounging near the piano, also a dark, elegant

man with an eyeglass—Colonel Latimer. Vincent gave me a long, devouring look, and presently came forward with a blonde girl in a dinner-dress of blue brocade.

"Miss Ravenel," he said, wickedly, "here is a lady whom you ought to know. Doubtless you have heard her name before—Doris Rokewood."

Miss Rokewood recoiled a step and bowed without a word. She was as white as a sheet. Gabriel's former betrothed seemed in nowise gratified to meet Gabriel's sister. Fortunately at that moment Hawkstone advanced and led me to the piano. A song was put before me—"Auld Robin Gray." I sang it through. Music has always been my particular passion, and I did my best upon this occasion. The room became perfectly still, even in the furthest corners; but around the piano a crowd gathered, and all eyes were fixed on me curiously.

"Ah, Latimer," said the Whithaven judge to the colonel with the eyeglass, "that's the sort of music to make old fellows like you and me young again!"

Other songs followed. Compliments poured upon me from every side—queer whispers, also, reached my ears in the pauses.

"Where the deuce did Hawkstone find such a handsome creature?" "Why hasn't he shown her before, sly dog?" "She's no end of a beauty." "And Vincent's off his head about her!" "Wonder if we shall be allowed to have her down here often?"

As I arose, at last, from the piano, I found Doris Rokewood standing at my shoulder. Her blonde face had grown gentle and gracious. I fancied there were tears in her eyes.

"You sing like an angel, Miss Ravenel," she said. "Let me thank you for the pleasure you have given me." And then she turned, as though she could not trust herself to say more, and vanished in the crowd.

Wednesday.—I descended to the garden this morning to gather a few flowers for the schoolroom. In a sheltered walk, leading down the terraces to the old sea-wall, I heard the rumble of light wheels, and a thin, rasping voice saying:

"Go back to the house, Parker, and get another wrap —I feel a chill."

"And leave you alone, sir?"

"Yes, yes. Make haste! Would you have me get my death in this damp sea-air?"

Footsteps went away up the path. I looked, and saw, a few yards from the spot where I stood, an invalid-chair, and in it a small man in a velvet skull-cap, with a worn, sickly face as yellow as parchment. Hawkstone's dogs were frisking round the chair, and one, a huge English mastiff, jostled it so violently that it began to roll down the walk.

"Hi, there!" cried the sick man, as he espied my dress in the shrubbery. "Jane, Sarah, Maggie!—whatever your name may be, lend me a hand here, will you?"

I flew to him, seized the chair, and held it firmly. He stared at me in a blank way.

"Beg pardon, young lady," he muttered; "I saw only your dress, and mistook you for a servant."

"You were not very far wrong, sir," I answered, cheerfully, "for I am little Bee Hawkstone's governess."

His cadaverous face put on a look that appalled me. I thought he was about to have a fit.

"Gabriel Ravenel's sister?" he roared. "Don't come near me! Take your hands off my chair! Take yourself out of my sight!"

"If I do that," I answered, "you will roll down the walk and come to harm. Permit me to stay by you till your attendant returns. I fear you are very, very angry with poor Gabriel!"

His curious yellow face was convulsed.

"*Poor* Gabriel!" he sneered. "How dare you mention his name in my presence? Girl, do you really love that unspeakable scoundrel?"

"Do I love my one, only brother?" I answered, indignantly. "Yes, sir, with all my heart!"

"Then, by my soul, I pity you! yes, I pity you——"

The sentence was not finished, for just then Parker, the colored valet, appeared in the walk, and Miss Roke-

wood with him. As the latter espied me by her guardian's chair, she darted forward in lively alarm.

"Guardy, dear guardy," she implored, "for my sake be careful what you say!"

"I have said nothing, Doris," he answered, grimly. "Give me the wrap, Parker, and move on."

The valet obeyed. To my surprise, Miss Rokewood caught me in her arms and kissed me.

"You must not mind Mr. Sutton," she said, in a hysterical way. "He is not the ogre that he appears. Under all his harshness he carries a kind heart. I am glad, Miss Ravenel, that you have found a safe shelter here at Tempest Island, and a powerful friend in Basil Hawkstone."

She went on after the wheeled chair, leaving me puzzled and miserable. Plainly, Gabriel is in the deepest disgrace with his kinsman and former friend, Mr. Sutton. I wonder if his infatuation for Mademoiselle Zephyr is his only sin, or has he committed others of which I have not been told? With a heavy heart I set about my daily tasks. From the schoolroom-window I saw Basil Hawkstone riding out through the horseshoe gate with Miss Rokewood, both superbly mounted, and followed by a half-score of dogs. He looked up and lifted his hat to me, grand as Sir Lancelot riding down to towered Camelot. The sunlight poured on his kingly head, his bronzed, scarred cheek, his magnificent figure. Then he went on, and a few moments after I heard the swish of soft garments, the click of French heels, and that pretty brunette widow, Mrs. Van Dorn, came flashing into my schoolroom.

"Have I discovered your den at last?" she laughed—she has beautiful white teeth, and she laughs continually. "I fell desperately in love with you last night in the drawing-room, my dear. So did everybody. As for the gentlemen, individually and collectively, you have quite turned their heads. Why do you hide yourself here?"—glancing contemptuously around my little kingdom. "Beauty like yours was never born to be wasted on the desert air of such a rookery as this."

Bee was in the midst of a lesson. As politely as possible I tried to explain to Mrs. Van Dorn that I did not receive callers in school-hours, but she laughed at me.

"I have not toiled up two flights of stairs to be lightly driven away," she said, as she shook out the ribbons and lace of her rose-colored morning-gown. "You poor thing! I know that the life of a governess is far from gay. I had a half-dozen of your kind when I was growing up, and I give you my word I made things uncommonly lively for all of them. Did you see Mr. Hawkstone riding off with Doris Rokewood? You would not be a woman if you did not look through these windows sometimes. We are bosom friends – Doris and I — a female Damon and Pythias; but really, she amazes me. Hearts are caught in the rebound, it is said. Doris is but just over one love affair, and already she is flirting with Hawkstone in a scandalous way. He admires blondes—his wife was of that type—you and I, unluckily, are brunettes."

Bee was listening, eager, round-eyed, to every word.

"I beg you will allow me to proceed with my lesson, Mrs. Van Dorn," I began, but she waved her bejeweled hand, and went on, undaunted:

"Every marriageable female in the house seems to be cherishing designs against Hawkstone. I call it outrageous. Has that little pitcher big ears? I hope she will not tell her papa what I say."

"She certainly will," I answered.

"How awkward!" laughed Mrs. Van Dorn. "I find Tempest Island lovely. Life here has a foreign flavor. Prince Lucifer is like an English baron, lording it over land and tenants. He is unique, superb—the most fascinating man that I have met for ages! Mrs. Ravenel, I heard an odd thing last night after you left the drawing-room. Somebody said that you were once selected to be Hawkstone's wife—that you were brought from the South for that very fate. You should have seen how jealous all the ladies grew when they heard *that!*"

She gave me a look so shrewd and penetrating that I felt my cheeks burn.

"Mrs. Van Dorn, you must not speak of such matters before my pupil," I said.

"It is true, then ?" she cried, triumphantly. "Yes, I see. You lost the post of island lady, and so accepted the humbler one of governess ? Well, that was sensible. Of course everybody expects Hawkstone to make an ambitious marriage the next time. No man can afford a second mistake of that sort. The pretty, dreadful circus-rider was enough——"

I started for the door, drawing Bee with me. Mrs. Van Dorn arose.

"*Nous verrons !*" she yawned. "Since I make you so uncomfortable, Miss Ravenel, I will leave you. I am going out sailing with our island lord when he returns from his gallop. He professes to admire a good sailor, and I am that. You see, he is the sun round which we all revolve at present—the fire at which more than one little moth seems determined to singe her foolish wings." And then she went away.

An hour or two later I saw Hawkstone return from his ride with Doris Rokewood—saw him lift her from the saddle, she blushing and laughing at something he said —saw Mrs. Van Dorn sweep down the garden-walk to meet him, with hands full of Autumn asters—saw her white teeth flashing, her black eyes shining ; but I did not want to look longer. I turned from the window, and hurried back to my books and Bee.

The afternoon shadows were stretching long in the garden when Mrs. Otway brought to the schoolroom an invitation for Bee and her governess to join a gypsy tea-party on the rocks.

"Mr. Hawkstone bade me say, 'Will you do him the favor to come, Miss Ravenel ?'" she said. "He is waiting for you in the porch."

My heart leaped into my throat, and then sank down like lead.

"I have a headache, Mrs. Otway," I answered. "Bee may go, but I cannot."

And Bee went, in the care of Doris Rokewood, and I remained alone in the schoolroom till twilight began to

gather, then I descended to the deserted garden, and sat down by the ancient dials. As I did so a man opened the horseshoe gate under the pear-trees, and stood by my side. It was Vincent Hawkstone.

CHAPTER XXI.

JETTA SPEAKS AGAIN.

"So THIS dashed, trumpery tea didn't lure you to the beach, Jetta?" he began. "It seems that you care little for all the infernal nonsense going on about the house of late. 'Pon my soul, you look as pale as a spirit! Something is troubling you; but your handsome eyes begin to flash! You hate me too much to accept my sympathy."

His voice trembled like a schoolgirl's. The sight of me had brought a passion of delight into his turbulent face. Who else in the wide world cared for my forlorn self like this?

"I do not hate you, Vincent," I began.

"You simply regard me with profound indifference. Is that it?"

"That is it," I assented, sadly; "and I do not want any sympathy, thank you—I need none. It's odd that *you* are not with the tea-party on the shore."

"Is it?" he answered, grimly. "I found you were not among them, and that was enough for me. You have spoiled me for the society of other women Great God!"—and a spasm of pain contracted his young face—"you have spoiled me for everything, Jetta—yes, for life itself."

"How absurdly you talk!" I said. "It is time you were cured of your folly, Vincent. By what singular perversity do you still hold to it. I am ashamed of you!"

He came nearer to me, breathing hard.

"Cured of my folly? That will never be! Prince Lucifer, if he likes, can drive me from the island, so I bridle my tongue that I may be allowed to remain near you. You may need me—who knows? Your brother—"

He stopped and bit his lip. I sprang to my feet.

"What do you mean?" I cried. "What do you know of my brother?"

"More than I like to tell," he answered, with an unpleasant smile. "Show me a little kindness, Jetta, and I will serve both you and Gabriel, for, mark you, I know his present straits and his need of help. Why cannot you love me? Am I old? am I ugly? It is said that love begets love, but were that true, you would have returned my passion long ago. Open your cold heart to me, Jetta! I will forgive all past rebuffs, if only you can be persuaded to extend me a little mercy now."

He was down on his knees in the grass, his distracted face raised to mine, his hands striving to clutch and hold me as I recoiled from him, all my softened feelings giving place, in an instant, to renewed aversion.

"Do not touch me!" I commanded; "do not speak to me any more, if you have only this to say. Of one thing be assured, Vincent Hawkstone—I shall never buy any knowledge or service of you at the price you mention."

He grew furious.

"You may be glad to do so before many days, Jetta! I perceive that some spell is at work on this island. Other women find Prince Lucifer irresistible—do *you?* Other women regard him as a lawful and desirable catch in the matrimonial field—do *you?* He has the art of dazzling your sex, of carrying all before him—do you recognize his power? Is it so? Come, you *shall* speak—I will know the whole truth—is it so?"

He made an attempt to take me in his arms. I gave an involuntary cry. The next instant a hand seized Vincent Hawkstone by the shoulder, and whirled him round like a top. The lord of the island stepped betwixt me and my unwelcome suitor.

"Vincent, this is going a trifle too far, is it not?" he said, sternly. "You vowed to me that you would not torment Miss Ravenel further. Now that you have broken your word, and outraged my forbearance, there's but one thing more for you to do—go, and never set foot on Tempest Island again, without my permission."

Vincent faced his cousin with a white, sinister look.

He was cast out, and that by one more powerful than himself.

"Very well," he sneered; "I go, my dear cousin, but some day I shall return, and then I, not you, will be the master of Tempest Island."

With this evil prophecy on his lips he departed through the horseshoe gate. I stood alone with Hawkstone. How much he had heard of my conversation with Vincent I do not know.

"It was fortunate that I was sent back to the house for extra wraps," he began, "otherwise that foolish boy might have given you serious trouble. He is incurable, it appears, and I must pity even while I condemn him." His hand closed suddenly upon mine. "I remember your high courage years ago, Miss Ravenel—it cannot have deserted you, I am sure. Allow no person to alarm you, listen to no tales, and should you be in need of counsel or assistance, come to me—for my stepmother's sake, come to *me!*"

His back was toward the gate. Before I could answer I was aware of a stealthy movement in that direction. Over me flashed a premonition of evil. I flung myself instinctively before Hawkstone. None too soon. There was a flash, a report—something whistled by my ear. I felt his arm around me—I heard him cry out:

"Great God! are you hurt?"

"I think not," I answered, and put my hand to my face, to find it wet with blood. The bullet had grazed my cheek, and neatly cut away a long lock of my hair.

Hawkstone put me down on the garden-seat without another word, and dashed out of the gate. After a little space, however, he reappeared, empty-handed.

"My cousin Vincent could not leave me without a parting token of his regard," he said, dryly. "Permit me to keep this hair as a souvenir."

He carefully gathered up the severed tress, and put it in his pocketbook; he wiped the blood from my cheek with his own handkerchief, then, darting in the house, he returned immediately with a glass of wine, which he pressed to my lips.

"Drink it!" he pleaded, as I tried to turn away. "Your white looks frighten me. Brave, noble child! I know not how to thank you! Undoubtedly, your promptness saved my life. I shall call Mrs. Otway, and tell her that you have met with an accident. We need not explain its nature—I do not care to proclaim Vincent an assassin—a coward who shoots in the dark."

I fled to my own room. The gypsy party came back from the shore, and Bee called aloud, as she passed my door:

"Good-night, dear Miss Ravenel. Mrs. Otway says you are not quite well, and must not be disturbed. I am very sorry. It was dull on the rocks without you."

Then I crept to my bed, and dreamed of Vincent Hawkstone trying to dip his hands in the blood of one who had been to him as a brother; and of Gabriel, under a cloud—in disgrace with Mr. Sutton—all his bright prospects flung away, because of his entanglement with the woman who was once Basil Hawkstone's wife.

Saturday.—This morning Basil Hawkstone sent up to the schoolroom a wicker basket tied with satin ribbons, and crowded with orchids, heliotrope and roses.

Sarah, the nursemaid, was badly frightened last night by the apparition of a woman wandering in the garden shrubbery.

"A creature like a corpse, Miss Ravenel," said Sarah to me; "all in white, with hair like the clouds we call mares' tails, blown about her dead face! She made my flesh creep—she did!"

"It was some guest of the house," I suggested.

"No, indeed, miss!" protested Sarah; "it was the island ghost, and it never came from any place nearer than the churchyard. Plenty of folks have seen it since Mr. Philip Hawkstone's murder."

But Mrs. Otway had a different communication to make to me.

"Everything belonging to Vincent Hawkstone has been sent to Whithaven," she announced, "and word delivered to all of us that he is not to be received on the island again. I, for one, am not sorry."

Monday.—Everybody went yachting to-day, and Tempest Hall was left silent and deserted. Mr. Hawkstone carried Bee with him, and I, thankful for a return, however brief, of the old solitude and quiet, went down to the porch, and seated myself under its reddening Autumn vines with a bit of needlework. Presently Doris Rokewood appeared in the hall-door. She wore a foulard dress, the color of corn-flowers. A velvet chatelaine bag, with antique silver clasps, was suspended at her side from velvet ribbons. Her silk stockings matched her dress, and silver buckles ornamented her French shoes. Altogether, she looked picturesque and charming.

"You did not go with the yachting party?" I said, in surprise.

She shook her flaxen head.

"No; I have been reading to my guardian. He has now fallen asleep."

She sat down in the porch and called the dogs around her. We talked of everything but Gabriel. His name she studiously avoided, and I had not the courage to mention it. In the midst of our conversation a stranger came through the gate, and lifted his hat to my companion.

"Don't let me alarm you, Miss Rokewood," he said, in a well-bred voice; "I have business with Mr. Sutton."

Alarmed she certainly was. Utter consternation appeared in her face. She started up with an involuntary look toward me.

"My guardian is asleep, Mr. Radnor," she faltered; "he had a bad night. Is your business important?"

"Nothing less would bring me from Whithaven," he answered, with a disagreeable smile. Then he fixed a pair of sharp eyes on me, and said: "I perceive that this young lady is Miss Ravenel. Her resemblance to her brother is very marked."

Miss Rokewood answered nothing. I, too, remained silent. Unabashed, Mr. Radnor began to tell me that he was a friend of Gabriel, and that he desired greatly to see him on a matter that closely concerned them both. He asked if I had resided long at the island, and did my

brother visit me, did he write to me, did I know his present address? All these questions were put in a polite and cautious way. I answered in monosyllables. Miss Rokewood, as I could see, was very uneasy. She turned on the man, at last, with an offended air.

"I will bid Parker wake Mr. Sutton," she said, sharply. "You had better go up to him at once."

As our visitor disappeared in the hall, Doris Rokewood caught me by the arm.

"Come!" she cried; "we must hide somewhere till that man leaves the island!"

I flew with her out of the gate. Before I realized what I was about, we were in the green solitude of the churchyard—certainly beyond the observation of Mr. Radnor.

"I did not wish him to see or speak to you again!" gasped Miss Rokewood. "I did not wish him to annoy you further."

"Is he a detective," I said, laughing at our absurd flight, "that he should ply me with so many questions?"

For answer, Miss Rokewood leaned suddenly against a tree, and burst into such a passion of weeping as I had never witnessed before—weeping that shook her from head to foot, and was all the more distressing to me because I could perceive no cause for it.

"Do not mind me," she said, at last, trying to smile; "we all have our weak moments, you know. This spot commands a view of the landing-place. Let us stay here till we see Mr. Radnor's boat leave for Whithaven."

So we remained silent among the old graves till the boat departed, then we went back to Tempest Hall, I secretly wondering what all this mystery could mean.

CHAPTER XXII.

JETTA SPEAKS ON.

ANOTHER week is over. For days the house has been ringing with notes of preparation for a great event—a fancy ball at Tempest Hall. Like a splendid, feverish dream the whole affair seems to me, as I recall it—the gayly decorated yachts in the roadstead, the island in

gala dress and full of festive commotion, the grand people thronging the house, and last night—the ball!

As soon as the sun set, headlands and beaches began to blaze with bonfires, and the entire garden, down to the old sea-wall, was hung with hundreds of colored lamps. Mrs. Otway begged me to go down-stairs with Bee, and to please the child I consented.

Palms and ferns, and orange-trees in full bloom, lined the wainscoted hall and the oaken stairways. India silks of every hue, brought by Hawkstone from abroad, stuffs from Persian looms, brocades, massive with peacocks' eyes, draped the two long drawing-rooms, now thrown into one. From a temporary balcony, hidden in flowers, an orchestra from Whithaven discoursed sweet music. The waxed floors glittered like mirrors; silver candelabra, as old as George III., held aloft clusters of lights.

I found a shelter for Bee and myself in a recessed window of the ballroom.

Hawkstone, in the dress of Rochambeau, was dancing a minuet with Miss Rokewood—the latter attired as a colonial belle. Violet Van Dorn flashed by in an Eastern dress of red velvet and gold brocade, with rows of gold sequins in her black hair. Watteau shepherdesses wandered about in pink and blue gowns, with Marie Antoinette fichus, and crooks ornamented with natural flowers. In the wake of these damsels followed a *jâtre*, in pale green jacket and lilac satin small-clothes. Ruffs and rapiers were there, ermine and velvets and jeweled girdles; trains of gold brocade, bordered with yellow feathers; diamonds and old Flemish laces; costly odors, radiant eyes, gay voices.

"It's like something out of my fairy-books," said Bee, as she sat beside me in her white frock of quaint Kate Greenaway pattern.

"Yes, dear," I answered.

The orchestra struck up Ghys's "Air de Louis XIII." Eight couples, in court costume, with Hawkstone and Miss Rokewood at their head, began the *gavotte*—that charming French dance, which carries one's thoughts

back two centuries, at least. As I sat watching the powdered and bejeweled ladies gliding under the uplifted rapiers of their gallants, Colonel Latimer, in the dress of a Turkish bey, entered my retreat. He held out to me an enormous bouquet of tuberoses.

"Sweets to the sweetest of all the world!" he murmured, in a voice too impassioned to be agreeable. "By Jove! it's a pity the handsomest woman in the room should be hiding behind a curtain, while her plainer sisters have their fling."

Pretending not to hear, I smelled the flowers and said to Bee, in a prim, governess fashion:

"My dear, in the gardens of Versailles there was once an alley, where King Louis's courtiers—those fine people who originally danced the *gavotte*—could not walk after nightfall, because of the overpowering odor of the tuberoses.

"Don't keep them," said Bee, turning up her small nose. "I like better the Parma violets that papa gave you at dinner."

"Here — take them, Colonel Latimer!" I exclaimed. "It is not strange that the French courtiers found such sickening sweetness unbearable."

With a disappointed air, he tossed the whole waxy, honeyed mass out of the open window.

"Since you reject them"— he sighed —"let them die."

I wished him a thousand miles distant at that moment. He leaned confidingly on the high back of my chair and looked out into the ballroom. His Turkish fez hid the bald spot on his crown, but brought into undue prominence his high Roman nose.

"Deuced good display, eh?" he remarked. "Hawkstone looks well in that court get-up. Pity men of his mold couldn't wear gold lace and side-arms nowadays. So picturesque!"

"Yes," I assented, rather vaguely.

"Yonder comes a death's-head at the feast," pursued our Turk, as Mr. Sutton appeared under a neighboring *portière*, supported by his valet. "Wonder what he can

find to amuse him *here?* He's a dyspeptic of the Thomas Carlyle stamp dancing isn't in his line."

"He seems very ill," I remarked.

"Of course. He was recently robbed and assaulted in his Newport house, you know, and being an invalid anyway, the affair nearly finished him."

"Robbed! assaulted!" I echoed, horrified.

To my surprise, the colonel grew as red as a lobster.

"By Jove! I oughtn't to have mentioned it!" he stammered. "Hawkstone begged us all never to speak of the matter here. My head is quite giddy to-night, Miss Ravenel." And his eyes beamed upon me all too kindly. "Won't you send this ever-present child away for a few moments, and let me speak to you alone?"

"I could not think of such a thing!" I answered. "Say nothing to me, Colonel Latimer, that Bee, or anybody in the room may not hear."

"Ah!" he groaned; "you, then, forbid me to hope?"

"Most certainly."

He heaved a prodigious sigh, and went out of the recess to come back no more.

By-and-by, Mr. Sutton, on the arm of Parker, approached our window. I drew back to avoid observation, but he stopped directly before me, and to my surprise held out one delicate hand.

"I must beg to be pardoned, Miss Ravenel, for my rudeness to you in the garden, when you were doing your best to serve me," he said, in an amiable voice. "I am a very unreasonable and disagreeable person—yes, a brute," as the tears leaped involuntarily to my eyes. "Doris Rokewood insists that I shall be friends with you, and I offer this apology very humbly."

I put my hand on his outstretched palm.

"Thank you, child," he said, kindly. "You have a heart above malice, I see."

And he went on, and was lost in the crowd.

Tableaux vivants followed the dancing. Only two of these interested me. One was Hero in her tower at Sestos, watching for Leander. Miss Rokewood, splendidly attired as became a priestess of Venus, made an im-

pressive Hero. Her robe of dull-blue velvet was clasped about the waist with a girdle of wrought silver. All her fair hair streamed loose on her shoulders. The sadness, the pale apprehension in her face, as she watched for her lost lover, seemed more real than feigned.

The second group that remained fixed in my memory was Hawkstone as Edward III. and Violet Van Dorn as Countess of Salisbury—he kneeling before her in the historic garter scene, and looking "every inch a king," in his velvet court dress and cloth of gold mantle.

At last Bee began to tire of so much splendor; so, after one peep at the supper-room, with all its crystal and sèvres and old plate, we stole out of the crowd and up to the nursery and Sarah.

On the stair, under the palms and orange-trees, I met a monk in a black robe, with a cowl drawn over his head. He flashed me one look from under the hood.

"*Le bon temps viendra*," he muttered, and I knew the voice of Vincent Hawkstone—he was there, disguised, among his cousin's guests.

"For God's sake, don't betray me!" he whispered. "I came only to see *you!*"

I fled to the night nursery with Bee, who, luckily, had not recognized the monk. Sarah undressed the child, and she said her prayers in drowsy jerks, and straightway fell asleep.

Then I retreated to my own chamber, but not to slumber. The *rencontre* on the stair disturbed me. "*Le bon temps viendra*"—the good time will come. What did he mean by that? I leaned my face against the cool window. Nearly all Hawkstone's guests were to pass the night on the island, and sounds of revelry still echoed in the rooms below. The bonfires on the headlands still reddened the outer gloom.

Another hour passed. The lamp went out, and left the chamber in darkness. My eyelids were growing heavy, when, of a sudden, I heard a queer scratching sound in the vines of the porch. As I looked, I saw a human head rise cautiously out of the leaves only a few feet from my window. A long, dark body followed it. The figure of

a man stood for an instant erect on the roof of the porch, as if taking observations, then vanished round an angle in the wall.

Was it a burglar? I remembered the display of jewels in the ballroom, the old plate on the supper-tables, and my heart gave a painful leap. I ran out into the passage to alarm the house, then, moved by some inexplicable impulse, turned back and rushed to Bee's nursery.

A man was leaning over the child's bed, pressing something down on her sleeping face. The sickening smell of chloroform greeted my nostrils.

"Help, Sarah!" I screamed, and threw myself on Bee just as the man attempted to raise her.

The night-lamp showed me that his face was masked. With an oath he tried to hurl me off.

"Let go, curse you!" he cried; but I clung the closer to the child, and screamed again:

"Sarah, Sarah! Oh, help!"

Out of the adjoining closet burst Sarah, in her night-clothes, bewildered, but courageous.

"Thieves! Robbers! Murder!" she shrieked.

The masked man struck me savagely, but I held Bee fast, and Sarah threw herself upon him with all her might. He shook her off, and sprang for the window. His legs were just disappearing over the sill when Hawkstone, still in his velvet-and-gold court-dress, sprang into the nursery.

"The child! The child!" cried Sarah. "A man has been trying to carry little miss away, sir."

"She is safe, Mr. Hawkstone," I gasped, "quite safe!" and having flung the cloth from her face, I laid Bee back on the bed.

At a single stride Hawkstone was at the window—out of it—following in the wake of the masked fugitive! Some presentiment of the truth flashed upon me. I flew down the stair—out into the garden—to the old dials. There was the culprit, prone on the grass, with Hawkstone's knee on his breast. As I reached the two the island lord snatched the mask from the face of the fallen man.

"Give an account of yourself!" he commanded. "Did you come here of your own will, or were you sent by another?"

A lamp left from the revel, swung from a bough overhead, shone on the faces of both men.

"Gabriel!" I cried. "Oh, Mr. Hawkstone, it is my brother Gabriel!"

Hawkstone arose from his prisoner—suffered Gabriel to rise, also.

"I see," he said, in a cold, hard voice; "Mademoiselle Zephyr's lover!"

Pale, haggard, disordered, changed almost beyond recognition, Gabriel stood there by the old dials, face to face with both Hawkstone and myself, but dumb as stone.

I ran to the island lord, crying wildly:

"Let him go! oh, let him go! That woman has driven him mad!"

Something strange went over Hawkstone's face.

"Go, then," he said to Gabriel—and his voice was very grave—"and do not come here again, for I have guests in this house that you would not like to meet—I mean George Sutton and his ward. Poor foolish boy, God knows I have no wish to detain you. For your sister's sake go while there is yet time!"

At the mention of Sutton's name Gabriel reeled back, as though he had received a blow.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" I cried, throwing my arms around him; "how ill and wretched you look!—how strange! What dreadful thing has happened to you? Do you need me? Shall I go with you, Gabriel? Speak the word, and I will follow you to the ends of the earth. Who have we but each other?"

He thrust me away, and answered, hoarsely:

"*You!* Good Heaven, no! I do not want you! Keep off, meddlesome little jade! But for you I might have carried the child away to-night."

Then, in furious excitement, he shook his clinched hand at Hawkstone.

"I ask no favors of you," he cried; "I don't wish any

thank you. Now and always, I am your enemy, and Vera shall have her daughter yet!"

He turned toward the gate I put myself before him. He had a white, hunted look that frightened me.

"Oh, Gabriel, where are you going?" I cried, in an agony of apprehension. "You are in trouble — let me help you!"

"In trouble?" he laughed, wildly. "Yes, in black seas of it! Can I rely on you in a crisis, Jetta?"

"Yes, oh, yes!" I sobbed.

"Remember that promise!" he cried, and vanished through the gate, and into the darkness beyond.

Hawkstone and I were left by the old dials alone. I felt sick and stunned. Never had my brother's character appeared to me in such an unlovely light—never had I pitied him so much. I leaned involuntarily against an old tree by the dials. A chilly, sullen light, faintly gray, was in the sky. I forgot Hawkstone's presence till he called my name.

"Jetta!"

As he towered above me in his splendid dress, in his cold, insolent strength, an unreasoning wrath arose in my heart.

"Strange," I cried, "that the Ravenels, both my father and his children, should be pursued by the same fate—disastrous entanglement with the Hawkstones! Better for all of us if we had never looked on one of your name! I have lost my brother—he is Gabriel no more—and all because of—of——"

He finished the sentence for me.

"The woman who was once my wife. Yes, it is true. The Hawkstones have brought evil to your family—God help me! I know this even better than you, and knowing it, I find it very hard to speak the words that can no longer be kept back, Jetta."

He bent and looked in my face by the faint light.

"Oh, child!" he groaned, "be generous now and show mercy to a Hawkstone!—give me the right to console and protect you, in place of Gabriel. With all my soul I long to make you my own—with all the strength that is

in me I love you, I love you! Long ago, my mother chose you for me—my very heart of hearts chooses you now!"

The world seemed heaving around me; the supreme moment of life had come. I knew that my master called —that I was no longer my own, but another's. I could not withhold my hands from his hands, my pale face from his eager, searching gaze, my lips from the rain of his kisses.

"Speak!" he implored. "Has your heart no answer to make to mine, Jetta? My life has been full of ills—in you alone can I find recompense for the past. Come to me, darling!—I need you immeasurably!"

He opened his arms. A rosy flush was now mantling the east, the sea murmured softly under the dawn. Somewhere above our heads a bird broke into faint, sweet twittering.

"Come!" he called again, and I made a step toward him—I fell on his breast, and he held me there, as though he would never, never let me go again!

CHAPTER XXIII.

JETTA STILL SPEAKS.

I AM Basil Hawkstone's promised wife! How strange and unreal it all seems! I can scarcely believe my own great happiness. He will have no secrecy about our love. By the time the late breakfast was over at Tempest Hall, everybody—the revelers of last night, and the household servants also—knew that the island lord was engaged to that very insignificant and unexpected person — his daughter's governess.

Some of the ladies wished me joy, in a cold and constrained way. Violet Van Dorn looked unutterably indignant. Miss Rokewood was the only one who congratulated me heartily. Colonel Latimer grew very pale and drew out his watch.

"I've an engagement in Whithaven at noon," he stammered; "sorry to say good-by so abruptly!"

Bee was radiant.

"And you are to be my mamma!" she cried. "Oh, I am so glad—I will love you so much!"

And she clasped me close in her little arms.

Mrs. Otway received the news with a grave face.

"My dear child," she sighed, "I wish you joy, but don't look for it as Basil Hawkstone's wife!"

I felt a creeping chill.

"Why do you say that, Mrs. Otway?"

"Are you so ignorant of the history of the family, that you should ask? The fate that has overtaken them all will not spare you." The tears rolled down her wrinkled cheeks. "How can you hope for peace or happiness, Miss Ravenel, while she—that other woman—lives? You have heard of the tragedy that happened here in your father's time? How much happiness did the second bride of Philip Hawkstone ever know?"

We were together in the housekeeper's room, where Mrs. Otway was sorting household linen. The windows opened on great beds of Autumn asters and geraniums, lifting shining faces to a cloudless sun; the sails of the windmills turned lazily in a soft breeze; the distant bleat of sheep came from the island moors. All was security and peace, and "the light that never was on land nor sea" filled my happy eyes. How could one talk of trouble on such a morning, and at such a time? Mrs. Otway put her arms suddenly about me.

"You are surrounded by foes," she said; "I fear for you—I fear for you——"

A shadow appeared at the window, and Basil Hawkstone looked in upon us. He had heard part of the conversation, at least.

"Mrs. Otway," he said, gravely, "don't attempt to frighten Jetta. I know she is making a bad bargain, but we must not tell her so"—smiling. "Love is stronger than hate, and rest assured"—with a flash in his grand, gray eyes—"I shall be able to protect my wife from all enemies!"

"I hope you may, sir," said Mrs. Otway, sadly; "yet I cannot help thinking that you will not succeed."

"Because I know that you have her welfare and mine at heart, I forgive your dismal prophecies, Mrs. Otway," he said, lightly. "But do not seek to part us now—only death can do that!"

* * * * * *

Already the guests are departing. I cannot but think that some of the ladies seem indifferent to a longer visit now that they have heard of Hawkstone's engagement. Of course, those who go to Whithaven will carry the news with them.

The yachts vanish in the blue distance, the house grows still. Miss Rokewood and her guardian alone remain. The latter has had a relapse, and Hawkstone will not permit him to leave the Hall until he is stronger.

* * * * * *

It is all arranged—I am to be married in this little island church, one month from date, and sail at once for Europe. He will go back to Egypt—to a Winter on the Nile, according to his original plans, and I am to share his wanderings in the land of the lotus—I am to see Cairo and Thebes and Luxor with him.

"All this seems very hasty,' I tried to say, when he had thus taken possession of my future; but he silenced me with a passionate embrace.

"Why should we wait?" he cried. "You have no friends to consult—I have none. Moreover, delays are dangerous. I dare not dally long with Happiness—I have found her too fickle, too uncertain—I must seize and make her my own at once!"

Why should I not bring a little joy into his life? Why should I not help him to forget his past? There can be but one supreme evil before me now—to lose Basil Hawkstone, and one supreme good—to share his future, whatever it may be.

"Oh, let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet,
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet.
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day."

The morning mail brought me two letters. The first, from Vincent Hawkstone, contained these words :

"You are on the brink of a precipice, Jetta. You must not, you shall not, marry Prince Lucifer! I wish to Heaven that I had killed him that night in the garden! If you persist in your present folly, you will bring destruction upon yourself, as well as upon him. Be warned in time."

The second letter was from my poor brother, and ran as follows :

"I am in great peril, Jetta—I need your help. To-night at sunset, meet me at Peg Patton's Inlet House. I am now a fugitive from justice, so, in the name of our dead father, come alone to your unhappy GABBIEL."

A fugitive from justice—terrible words! My heart leaped into my throat. A black cloud seemed to fall on all my new-found happiness. I gave Vincent's letter to Hawkstone, but concealed Gabriel's in my handkerchief, and smiled when my lordly lover asked me the cause of my sudden pallor.

After lunch Miss Rokewood went over to the light-house, on an extreme point of the island, and took Bee with her in the pony-cart. It is a long, lonesome ride, and the roads are rough. I charged her to be very careful of Bee.

"You will make a model stepmamma, Miss Ravenel," she answered, gayly. "I pledge you my word that I will return the child to you unharmed."

I saw them go off together, Bee shaking the lines over the fat backs of the ponies—Miss Rokewood's kind arm thrown firmly around her, and a half-dozen dogs barking at the wheels of the cart. Some business matter had called Hawkstone to Whithaven—he would not return till dark. The invalid, Mr. Sutton, was a prisoner in his room. So I found the coast quite clear, and a little before sunset I started alone for Peg's Inlet.

Somehow the walk across the dunes had never seemed so lonely as on this night. The chill of Autumn was in the air. How would Tempest Island look, I wondered, in a shroud of snow? Ah, before the falling of the white

flakes, I should be far away with my lover, in a Summer land!

I reached the beach where I had once before met Gabriel, and turned up the forest path to the Inlet House. Dead leaves rustled under my feet. Here and there a red tree stood up, like a torch, in the gloom. I heard

—"the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

In nervous haste I went on till I came in sight of the house. In the doorway sat Peg Patton, with her brown hands clasped around her knees, and a cob pipe between her lips. She arose as I approached.

"Is any one waiting for me here, Peggy?" I asked, my heart beating fast.

"Yes, miss," she answered, and motioned me to enter. "You will find the person inside."

I stepped across the threshold into Peg's living-room.

The light was fading fast, and at first I could discern no object clearly in the low, dark place, but as I stood gazing around it in vague alarm, a figure started out of an obscure corner, and advanced toward me with a cat-like tread—not Gabriel—not my unfortunate brother, but Mademoiselle Zephyr, the former wife of Basil Hawkstone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JETTA STILL SPEAKS.

"I WEAR no disguise this time, you see!" These were mademoiselle's first words, as we stood together in Peg's darkening room.

I felt a curious shock.

"Where is the person who summoned me to this house?" I demanded, indignantly.

Mademoiselle shrugged her shoulders.

"She stands before you! That was a little *ruse* of mine. Your brother is at present under a 'prodigious ban of excommunication.' It would be scarcely prudent for him to venture again to the Tempest. He wrote the

letter you received at *my* dictation—I knew it would bring you, and I was anxious for an interview."

She was dressed in some rich fabric that swept Peg's bare floor in shimmering folds. Her yellow, babyish hair clustered about her face in little rings and tendrils—it was the same blonde, angelic face that had brought shame and grief to Tempest Island six years before.

"Our last meeting in the Hall garden was not altogether satisfactory," she continued, with an airy toss of her golden head. "On that occasion you put the poor gypsy basket-seller to total rout, and proved yourself to be a rival whom it is not safe to despise. Well, I drove you from the island six years ago—see how time and fate have avenged you, Jetta Ravenel! I am now the outcast, and you the power behind the throne—the shrine at which Prince Lucifer kneels. One can always find revenge for most things in this world, I notice, if one has patience to wait."

I tried to keep an unmoved front.

"Gabriel has been guilty of an unworthy trick," I said; "but I will not blame him, for he is in your toils. You have changed his whole nature—you have ruined his future prospects—what more would you do? Where is he now hiding? Since you have forced this meeting upon me, I demand my unhappy brother at your hands!"

She burst into a mocking laugh.

"I am not Gabriel's keeper. Have I ruined his prospects? Ah, it is plain that Hawkstone, who can be delightful when he is in love, conceals the truth from you, and unwittingly leaves to me the pleasure of revealing it! Perhaps you may understand some things better when I tell you that your brother is a—thief! that he robbed George Sutton in his Newport house a few weeks ago, and then attacked him savagely and left him for dead. Where is he hiding? In dens and caves, I presume, as all criminals hide from justice. The chief business of his life now is to evade the officers of the law."

I did not faint or cry out—I did not lose my head. I looked her full in her fair, malicious face, and said, calmly:

"It is a falsehood!"

"If you really believed that," she answered, "you would not grow so pale! Of course, Gabriel's insane passion for me is at the bottom of his crime. He loves me so much—absurd boy!—that he would cheerfully murder any one who stood between us—rob any one, to supply me with diamonds and other trifles. Miss Ravenel, you have struck at me through Basil Hawkstone—I can wound you with your own weapons through your brother Gabriel. I always hated you furiously, you know."

"I fail to see how that fact justifies you in destroying Gabriel," I gasped. "Are you a woman or a fiend, that you would make him sin and suffer simply because he is my brother?"

The wicked laugh bubbled over Vera's lips again, as she went on:

"In the battle betwixt you and me I shall neither give nor expect quarter. I mean to destroy you and yours without mercy. You have taken from me my husband—the father of my child. Don't say that the law had already separated us—but for you I should have won him back, sooner or later. Great Heaven!"—passionately clasping a pair of lily hands heavy with jewels—"I always *meant* to win him back! I am Bee's mother—I am Basil Hawkstone's wife! I love him still—love him madly, passionately, and who right have *you* to step betwixt those whom God hath joined?"

I stood and looked at her, stunned, overwhelmed, and at that moment the airy structure of happiness which I had built in the last few days collapsed and went down in utter ruin.

"You dare to love my husband!" hissed Vera. "It is a criminal, unholy love! I cry out against it! In a month you will marry him and go abroad—to Egypt—to some Eden that he will find for his new Eve? You cannot go so far that my vengeance will not pursue you—the vengeance of a wronged, outraged heart-broken woman!"

I fell back a step, and passed my hand across my eyes—I seemed scathed by lightning.

"Have you nothing to say?" sneered my enemy. "Can you make no defense? Had you known the secret history of the Hawkstones, you might have hesitated before you set yourself to bewitch my husband!"

She swept up to the mantel, and lighted a candle. Then she called out, suddenly and sharply: "Peg—Peg Patton!"

The brown woman appeared in the door.

"Take the light, Peg," commanded mademoiselle, "and we will follow you. You have something to show Miss Ravenel—a little story to tell her."

Peg took the candle in one hand, and made a motion to me with the other. Mechanically I obeyed the beckoning fingers, and stepped out into a long passage. There, a door that I had not perceived, opened to Peg's touch. She drew me forward into an apartment, the luxurious appointments of which might have surprised me at any other time, and Mademoiselle Zephyr followed us. From the ceiling a lamp was suspended, and below it, on a pile of soft rugs, sat a woman playing with a heap of sea-shells. I looked, and recognized the island ghost—the mysterious person that I had first seen years before, in the Hawkstone tomb. She did not lift her eyes as we entered—did not seem to see us. Both her face, and the hair that streamed loose on her shoulders, were as white as hoar-frost. She wore a trailing white gown, which added to her spectral appearance. With fingers like streaks of foam, she went on sorting the shells, and crooning, brokenly:

"'Oh, the moment was sad when my love and I parted,
Savourneen deelish, shighan oh!
As I kissed off her tears I was nigh broken-hearted,
Savourneen deelish, shighan oh!'"

The pathetic voice went through me like a knife. I started back a step and looked at Peg Patton, who was gazing steadfastly at me.

"Did you ever see this woman before, Miss Ravenel?" she said.

"Yes."

"Do you know who she is?"

"No."

Something tragic came into Peg's heavy brown face.

"Look at her!" she cried. "She is the mother of Basil Hawkstone, and *the murderess of his father!*"

I stood dumb. Mademoiselle Zephyr sank gracefully down on a sofa, with a mocking smile on her lips.

"The night that Philip Hawkstone brought home his second bride," said Peg Patton, "this, his divorced wife, followed him, in a common fishing-boat, from Whithaven, entered his chamber, and stabbed him to the heart as he lay sleeping beside his new love."

"Who shall say that she did not do well?" interrupted mademoiselle from the sofa.

"I was sitting in the church-porch that night, thinking of my false lover," went on Peg—"for Philip Hawkstone was that, as perhaps you know, miss—when a strange apparition came flying toward me from the direction of Tempest Hall. There was a flash of lightning, and I recognized Hawkstone's former wife; her dress and her hands were stained with blood, and she was like one distraught. 'Hide me,' she exclaimed, 'for I've killed him!'

"I hurried her to this very house, where I lived with my old blind granny——"

"Our friend was kindly disposed toward the murderess, because she had done the very deed which Peg herself longed to do!" said mademoiselle, from the sofa.

"Never mind about that!" answered Peg, sullenly, "We had both suffered, and for the same man. I'll own that I felt akin to her that night. As soon as we got to the Inlet she began to rave in delirium. What do you think I did then? Locked her up from the blind granny, flew back to Tempest Hall, and told the new wife the whole truth! I, the sweetheart that Philip Hawkstone had jilted, stood that night 'twixt the two women he had wedded. 'Will you give her up to justice?' I said to Jetta Hawkstone. 'She'll be hung sure if you do! Her heart is broke and her wits are gone. Your coming to the island has fairly driven her mad.

Will you give her up ?' And she answered, 'No, never ! Besides, there's the child.' 'Yes,' said I, 'there's the child. Is he going to be told, in after years, that his mother murdered his father ? We must conceal her, and keep the secret always.' 'We will,' said Jetta Hawkstone. 'Go home, Peggy, and take care of her at the Inlet House till I come.'

"The poor creature was shrieking in brain fever by the time I reached home. With the help Mrs. Hawkstone sent me I nursed her night and day. I barred every door and window of the house, and nobody on the island, or off it, dreamed of what I was doing here. We knew from her ravings that she had adored her husband, and that he cast her off simply because he was tired of her.

"Well, miss, the keeping of the secret was the punishment that Jetta Hawkstone imposed upon herself for the part she had innocently played in the tragedy. She declared that she was to blame for the awful deed the first wife had done—that, by marrying Philip Hawkstone, she had brought destruction upon him, and to the end of her days she was full of regrets and remorse. As for Master Basil, she loved him beyond belief, and vowed to hide his mother's crime from him while her life lasted—to hide it from the world, too, for the boy's sake. And she was a woman of her word—was Jetta Hawkstone. She suffered herself—she let others suffer, but year after year she kept her lips sealed, and sheltered the murderess here, and provided abundantly for her wants. Apart from our two selves, the only person on the Tempest who knew the whole truth was Harris, the overseer. Master Basil never dreamed of it till his stepmother died.

"Well, *she* got well of the fever"—jerking a brown hand toward the madwoman—"but her brain was left weak and queer—her wits never came back. Mrs. Hawkstone built this room for her, and put in the secret door, to guard against surprises, and made her comfortable in all ways, even to indulging her whims for white gowns, and sea-shells, and the singing of songs. She's harmless enough, but sometimes she gets out, in spite of me, and frightens the island folks, who think she is a spook.

"Basil Hawkstone still keeps her here, not from fear of the law, for she's only fit for a madhouse, but because she seems fond of the place and of me. We both think that at this late day, when the world has forgotten the murder, her miserable story had best be left untold—unknown. Now, Miss Ravenel"—turning sharply on me—"I s'pose you wonder why I've brought you to see her to-night—why I've raked up the old tragedy? It's because you've promised to marry Philip Hawkstone's son! Am I not your friend when I try to show you the rough path which that other Jetta trod before you—when I try to turn your feet out of it?"

The white woman started up from the pile of rugs on the floor, and held out to me a shell.

"Listen!" she said, in a sad, gentle voice. "There's a message inside it for you. Do you hear? *Go away from this island—go at once, or you are lost!*"

"Even lunatics have moments of wisdom!" laughed mademoiselle, as she arose from the sofa and shook out her silken train.

Peg Patton retreated into the passage. I followed with the circus-rider. The secret door closed noiselessly on Hawkstone's mad mother.

"Do not forget the story you have heard, Miss Ravenel," sneered Mademoiselle Zephyr. "And wait! I've a message to send Basil Hawkstone. Three times I have failed to get possession of my child, but as the Lord liveth, and as my soul liveth, he shall not keep her from me one day longer! Now, farewell."

How I escaped from the house I cannot tell. The first that I remember I was flying down the forest path to the beach. The owls hooted in the twilight, the night-hawks flew over my head. I leaned, at last, against the rock of the "Old Woman," and looked out with blank, sightless eyes on the gray sea. My dream of love and happiness was done—the gate of my Eden had already closed behind me. And then I heard a step, and I knew he was coming to seek me—he was even then at my side.

"What a fright you have given me, Jetta!" he cried.

"I returned from Whithaven to find the house empty and desolate. Miss Rokewood and Bee have not yet appeared, and you——"

He stopped and turned my face toward the afterglow of sunset.

"Jetta! how white and strange you look! Why do you shrink from me?—what has happened?"

"Take your arms away!" I answered, wildly. "Do not touch me, Basil—never again! We are parted—we can never, never marry!" And I told him all.

His face grew turbulent for a moment, then hardened into ominous lines.

"My poor darling," he said, gently, "you have fallen too readily into mademoiselle's net! I do not regret that you have seen my mother, or heard her story, for I would have no secrets from the woman I love. But what can I say of that second-rate actress—that vindictive, mischief-loving cheat, Mademoiselle Zephyr? Believe me, she has but two idols—herself and the circus-ring. Bee, she never loved—her desertion of the child, and the cruel physical injury which she inflicted on her six years ago, prove that. Me she hates with her whole heart. The farce that she is playing would be amusing, if it did not threaten my future happiness—I would laugh at her plots, if they were not directed against your peace as well as my own. Do you say that we are parted from each other, Jetta? Not on this side of the grave, and not by any living mortal!"

I looked straight into the eyes of the man I loved, and answered:

"After what has passed to-night, could I ever be happy as your wife? The broken heart of that woman at the Inlet House, the protests of Bee's mother, the shame, the disgrace which my brother Gabriel has brought upon me, all hold us wide apart! There's a great gulf fixed between us. Your wife I can never be! My heart may break, but not this my resolution!"

His volcanic eyes, the hard lines of his mouth, told me that I had met my master. Yet he drew my hand very gently through his arm.

"My darling, let me take you back to the house. I will not try to reason with you now," he said, with unutterable tenderness. "I will not even reproach you, for you are already overwhelmed. As for Gabriel, it is quite true that he owes his ruin to Mademoiselle Zephyr. Leave him entirely to me—leave all your troubles to me, Jetta, for the fact that they *are* yours makes them mine also."

In silence I went on with him over the dunes. My ears were still ringing with Vera's threats and reproaches, my eyes could see nothing but the madwoman playing with her heap of shells. Never could I marry Basil Hawkstone till these things were for ever blotted from my memory.

Mrs. Otway met us at the door of Tempest Hall.

"Oh," she cried, in great distress, "a dreadful thing has happened. Miss Bee is lost!"

"Lost!" we echoed, in the same breath.

"The ponies ran away," explained the housekeeper, "when Miss Rokewood and the child were returning from the lighthouse. Both were thrown out. Miss Rokewood's head struck a stone, and she fainted. When she came to herself, she says, she could find nothing of Bee. The child had disappeared, leaving not a trace behind. She searched everywhere, and was finally obliged to come home, and call Harris and the servants to help. Not ten minutes ago they all started off on the road to the lighthouse—they thought it wasn't best to wait for you, sir."

"'One woe doth tread upon another's heels,
So fast they follow,'"

muttered Hawkstone. "At what hour, and at what spot in the road, did this mysterious disappearance take place?"

"I'm not sure," answered the housekeeper, wildly. "Miss Rokewood will tell you. I wish you would order somebody to ring the alarm-bell, sir!"

He turned to me with bent brows.

"Mademoiselle Zephyr has fulfilled her threat," he

said. "In some unknown way she has got possession of the child at last!"

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PARTING.

THE alarm-bell rang sharply from the steeple of the island church, and directly every able-bodied man on the Tempest had gathered at the door of the Hall.

Hawkstone's words were few—his little daughter was missing—the whole place must be searched at once. He himself mounted a fleet horse and started out to overtake the party led by Harris and Doris Rokewood. He came up with it at that very spot in the road where Bee had so mysteriously disappeared. Miss Rokewood, pale and distressed, rushed to meet him, and related the same story that he had heard from Mrs. Otway. The ponies had taken fright and bolted, as she was returning from the lighthouse. She had been thrown out and stunned, and in that interval of unconsciousness—not more than ten or fifteen minutes, she thought—Bee had vanished as completely as though the earth had swallowed her.

"What frightened the ponies?" asked Hawkstone, quickly.

"Something moved suddenly in a thicket by the roadside," Miss Rokewood answered, in great grief and remorse; "I caught one glimpse of a dark object crouching there—whether man or beast I cannot say, for my attention was instantly drawn away to the beasts. Oh, Mr. Hawkstone, will you ever cease to blame me for this disaster?—can you ever forgive me?"

"There is nothing to forgive," he answered, kindly; "nothing for which I can blame you. Do not distress yourself. Please God, we will find Bee again, and before many hours. I ought to have been on my guard, knowing, as I did, that an outrage of this kind was always imminent. Harris shall take you back to the Hall, Miss Rokewood—leave the search to me—I know into whose hands my daughter has fallen."

He gave a few orders to his servants, then turned his

horse's head, and rode off through the gathering night straight to Peg Patton's Inlet house.

The brown woman was still sitting in her low door, smoking her cob pipe. Hawkstone swung himself out of his saddle, and strode up to her with an ominous air.

"Peg!"

"Master?" she answered, inquiringly.

"Is that woman still in your house?"

Peg unlocked the swarthy hands that held her knees, and answered:

"No, sir. She went back to Whithaven an hour ago."

His face was dark with anger. He put one hand heavily on her shoulder.

"I am not quite pleased with you to-night, Peg. My daughter has disappeared from Tempest Island. Now tell me the truth—don't dare to trifle with me. When Mademoiselle Zephyr went back to Whithaven, did she take Bee with her, and what help did *you* give her in the business?"

Peg dashed down her cob pipe, and confronted her master boldly.

"Have I served the Hawkstones for more than twenty years, sir, to be suspected, at last, of treachery to you and yours? Is your opinion of me so poor that you think I would stoop to help any one—mind you, *any one!*—steal your daughter? If Mademoiselle Zephyr, as you call her, has taken the child, God is my witness that I had no part in it! I haven't set eyes on Miss Bee. A Whithaven boat brought your former wife to the Inlet, and also took her away—I didn't watch her come or go—it wasn't my business."

"In that case, you do not know whether she was alone or not, eh?"

"I can see some things, master, without watching," answered Peg, dryly. "There was a dark, thickset man with her when she appeared at my door. He turned and went off into the wood."

"Jasper Hatton!" thought Hawkstone. He regarded Peg with unappeased wrath.

"Why did you lend your aid to decoy Miss Ravenel

here to-night? Why did you fill her ears with a story which might better have been told at another time? How dared you, at the bidding of Mademoiselle Zephyr, seek to turn from me the heart of the woman I love?"

Peg looked the island lord squarely in the face, and replied:

"I gave your former wife the shelter of my roof for an hour or two, master, because I could not deny such a small favor to one who had once borne the name of Hawkstone; but I didn't decoy Miss Ravenel here—that was the work of Mademoiselle Zephyr. True, I spoke my mind to her, sir—I told her your mother's story. For the sake of Philip Hawkstone's second wife, I could not let the girl that she brought to this island rush into marriage with you without knowing something of the fate of those who had been before her—something of what she herself may expect, if ever she becomes your wife." He winced visibly. "Answer me, master, would it not have been a sin and shame to stand by and see Miss Ravenel marry you with the truth untold?"

He frowned.

"You have meddled with my private affairs in an unwarrantable manner, Peg," he answered, sternly. "Were it not for your long service to me and mine I should find it hard to forgive you."

"I did right, sir—I *know* I did right!" persisted Peg, stubbornly.

With a dark suspicion in his eyes, he stepped suddenly into the Inlet house, and seized a candle from Peg's mantel.

"With your permission," he said, dryly, "I will go and see my mother!"

Peg followed him as he strode down the passage, and through the secret door to the apartment of the madwoman.

The lamp was still burning there, the sea-shells still strewed the floor, but the place was empty.

"What has become of her, Peg?" demanded Hawkstone, sharply.

"It's likely she's slipped out on one of her flights round

the island, sir," answered Peg, looking blank, "though I didn't see her go—I never do. She's more like a spirit than a woman. If I try to lock her in, she grows violent. I've found from experience that it's best to let her have her own way. Besides, she knows how to manage the secret door as well as I do."

He gave a searching glance around the room, then put the candle in Peg's hand.

"I see, master," she said, sadly, "you doubted me—you thought I might be hiding Miss Bee here. "Can't you believe me when I tell you again that I haven't seen the child, and know nothing of her? *Won't* you believe me for the sake of my past service?"

"Yes!" answered Hawkstone, "I can—I do believe you, Peg! Now come and show me the way which that dark, thickset man took when he turned into the wood."

She went with him in silence. The salt tide was gurgling in the creek; the brown leaves rustled down upon them, as they moved together under the twisted pepperidge-trees. Peg pointed to a little path running away into the deeper silence and darkness of the forest, and Hawkstone nodded.

"It joins the island road," he said, "at the very spot where Miss Rokewood's ponies took fright at some strange movement in the thicket. Yes, all is now quite plain to me, Peg."

Then he mounted his horse again, and rode away by the border of the creek.

He had small hope of finding there any track of Bee's abductors. The incoming tide had been at work before him, and of course he was ignorant of the exact spot where the Whithaven boat had waited for Mademoiselle Zephyr. Dark as it was, however, his keen eyes suddenly discovered something swinging from a low bough near the entrance to the creek. It was a sash of pale ribbon, worn, as he remembered, by Bee when she started with Miss Rokewood for the lighthouse. He slipped it into his pocket. All was plain to him, indeed! Madame Vera had with great success substituted the aid of Jasper Hatton for that of Gabriel Ravenel.

He went back to Tempest Hall to await the return of the searching party. He could not leave the island till he had arranged certain affairs with Harris, as it was difficult to tell how long a chase Mademoiselle Zephyr might lead him.

Jetta Ravenel and Miss Rokewood stood waiting in the porch as Hawkstone dismounted at the door.

"No news," he said, grimly, before either could speak, "Bee has been carried from the island. I shall start in pursuit as soon as possible." Then aside to Miss Ravenel, who leaned white and cold against a pillar of the porch: "I must see you alone before I go—I have something to say to you."

She made a slight gesture of acquiescence. Doris Rokewood followed Hawkstone into the Hall. Her usually calm exterior was greatly ruffled.

"All this is very dreadful," she cried; "and my guardian is in a fever of anxiety because Bee was in my care when she disappeared."

"Have I not assured you that you are in nowise accountable for the loss of Bee?" he answered, soothingly. "I beg you to cease reproaching yourself. Before many hours, I shall return with the child."

The night was far spent before Harris and the searching party came back to Tempest Hall. They had found no trace of Bee. After a long conversation with the overseer, Hawkstone ordered Sampson and his catboat to await him at the wharf, then snatched a hasty breakfast alone, for neither Miss Rokewood nor Jetta Ravenel appeared at the meal, and repaired straightway to the old library for a last interview with the woman he loved.

After a brief delay, which seemed an eternity to his furious impatience, Jetta Ravenel entered with a slow, reluctant step.

She was very pale—the dark shadows under her eyes told that she had not slept. He took her hand—it lay cold as snow in his clasp. About her lovely mobile lips were resolute lines that filled him with alarm.

"I see—you have been thinking over our conversation of last night?" he said.

"Yes," she answered, and drew her hand significantly from him. "My determination remains unshaken."

"You will not marry me, Jetta?"

"No!"

"And you can stand and say this, knowing that you are deliberately putting a knife through my heart?"

"There is a knife in my own!" she answered, drawing a shuddering breath.

The pain, the pallor of her face, in its drift of dark rich hair, maddened him. He tried to take her in his arms. She repulsed him—gently, indeed, but firmly.

"You make it very hard for me, Basil," she faltered. "It is impossible that I can ever know happiness, or peace of conscience, as your wife. Spare me further words."

His iron-gray eyes blazed with desperate passion.

"Every man will make a stand for this life!" he cried, bitterly. "You are assailing the very citadel of mine! I will not live apart from you, Jetta, for I can have no life apart. Your scruples shall not avail with me. You love me, I love you—this is the only thing worthy of our consideration."

"Oh, hush!" she implored.

"No, you must hear me out. I am free to marry you lawfully, and neither Mademoiselle Zephyr, nor any other living creature, shall hold us asunder. I freely acknowledge that my father committed a cruel sin when he cast off my mother and married another woman. Do you find any parallel betwixt her case and that of the girl who deliberately deserted husband and child to fly with Jasper Hatton back to the circus-ring? You dare not tell me that you do! Her protests against my marriage with you are as false as herself. Shall I allow you to sacrifice our happiness to her vengeance and jealousy?—never! You have promised me your hand, Jetta—I will never give you up, nor release you, under any circumstances, from your engagement."

She trembled as she answered.

"All that you say only convinces me that I must leave the island at once—that I must put the world betwixt

myself and you, Basil. I never can, I never will, marry you while Bee's mother lives. I tell you again, as I told you last night—you may break my heart, but not my resolution. I must go away to some spot where you will never see—never hear of me more!"

"And where will you find that spot?" he demanded, fiercely. "Not on this side of the grave! Whither you go, I will follow!"

"Now you are unkind, ungenerous—unlike yourself," she sobbed. "In this battle the odds must ever be against me. I leave you, Basil, because it is right that I should do so."

"Right that you should cast me from heaven down to perdition? Right that you should utterly lay waste my life? You have small comprehension of the love I bear you if you think I will submit to such a fate."

The wavery Autumn sunshine, peering through the small panes of the library-windows, struck mournfully on the wan faces of the two lovers. Jetta Ravenel looked around, as though seeking some avenue of escape. All the heart within her—a passionate, Southern heart that, like a flower, had wakened to life under the ardent sun of his gray eyes—reached after this man; but an iron hand seemed holding her back from him. Her visit to the Inlet house—all that she had seen and heard there, still pressed upon her like a nightmare horror.

"Basil," she gasped, "I cannot talk of it now. Let us face the inevitable with courage. Your fate can be no sadder than my own. You are going away this morning in pursuit of Bee?"

"Yes," he answered, gloomily.

A spasm of pain contracted her pale, sweet lips.

"Ah, poor little Bee! I see now that my presence at Tempest Island has been disastrous to you all. No attempt was made to carry away the child till I came—none might ever have been made but for me. I have provoked this crisis—another reason why I should go."

The haggard reproach of his look made her shrink.

"Your argument is a poor one, so far as it concerns me, Jetta, since no trouble, no possible disaster, can

equal that of separation from you. Oh, girl, girl! how can you be so stubborn, so determined, when you know that you are breaking my heart? Bee may go—I will not leave this spot to search for her—the whole world may go, unless you swear that you will stay on the Tempest till I return to it."

"Oh, be calm!" she entreated. "Go and look for Bee—go at once! You have no right to delay a moment. Yes, yes, I will stay at the Hall till you come back—I will not leave the place till you bring the child—I promise faithfully."

He snatched her to his heart, and pressed his lips to hers.

"No more than this? Will you promise no more, Jetta?"

"I must not—I cannot!"

"Ah, you are a woman, and therefore it is not possible that you can slay both your own heart and mine! If I did not believe this, no power on earth should tear me from the Tempest. I would not leave you if a thousand voices of duty called. Oh, my dearest! be merciful to me and to yourself! Oh, my dearest! keep faith with your lover, and when I return, God grant that you may be less cruel, and I less wretched!"

It was well that his arms fell away from her with the last word, for he was taxing her powers of endurance to the utmost. She could not look longer in that splendid, reproachful face, and keep her determined front. He went out in silence and closed the library-door.

Half an hour after, Sampson's catboat was dancing over the blue water toward Whithaven, bearing the island lord, who looked back, again and again, with troubled, anxious eyes, to the old Hall on the wooded slope, where he had left the woman that he loved.

When and where would he meet her again?

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE SEARCH.

The boat reached Whithaven shortly before noon. As Hawkstone sprang ashore at the wharf where the island

people were wont to land on their visits to the main, a man stepped out from a group of loungers there, and put himself before our hero with a shamefaced, deprecatory air.

"I say, Prince Lucifer," stammered Vincent Hawkstone, "you are too late, you know — the game has flown!"

Hawkstone pulled himself up and looked sharply at the kinsman who had so recently attempted his life.

"I've been walking about this wharf for hours, watching, like Sister Anne on Bluebeard's tower, for Sampson's boat," went on Vincent, before the other could speak. "By Jove! you haven't hurried yourself! I thought you would be in Whithaven by sunrise. Should have skipped down to the island and offered my services, but was under ban, you know, and was sure your islanders wouldn't let me land. See here, Prince Lucifer—a madman isn't considered responsible for his misdeeds, and I was stark, staring mad the night I shot at you in the island garden. Had been drinking hard, you see."

Hawkstone looked at him a moment in stern silence, then answered, dryly, "No doubt!"

The handsome ne'er-do-well put on a meek and penitent air.

"Well, I'm deucedly repentant now. Come, you were always generous, Prince Lucifer—always noble. I'll admit that I've tried your patience abominably in the past, but can't you make up your mind to forgive me once more?"

A frown knit Hawkstone's brows.

"If I find it more easy to distrust than to believe you, Vincent, you have only yourself to blame," he answered.

"True—too true!" said Vincent, airily. "Nevertheless, peace must be patched up between us—shake hands and be friends."

Hawkstone put out his hand, coldly, reluctantly. He pitied quite as much as he despised his ingrate cousin.

"You will probably give me abundant cause to repent my weakness before many days are over," he said.

Vincent seized the hand with great eagerness.

"Heaven forbid! Don't think so poorly of me, Magnanimous Prince Lucifer; thanks awfully for this ghost of a pardon! I am mad to help you, now that you find yourself in trouble. Don't frown—I know the errand that has brought you to Whithaven—yes, and I saw at the hotel last night your lost daughter, secure in the clutches of her triumphant mamma! Of course, nobody here has any right to interfere 'twixt mother and child; so Madame Vera and her offspring remained undisturbed at the Eagle House till seven o'clock this morning; then madame, with bag and baggage, her French maid, little Bee, and last but not least, a swarthy fellow called Hatton, departed for New York on the early express. And, 'pon my soul, Prince Lucifer, he that follows in the hope of overtaking that party must have swift heels, and all his wits to the fore!"

Hawkstone's face grew dark. "That Hatton again!"

"Yes; one of Madame Vera's many lovers—he has pursued her for years, I hear. Now they're off for Europe, probably. You'd better look them up on the transatlantic steamers. You see, they're safe in Gotham by this time—have got a good start of you, for you can't follow till the next train, which won't leave Whithaven for a half-hour yet. Come up to the Eagle House, and hear the facts which I have given you confirmed by the people there."

Hawkstone went—in a furious frame of mind. At the hotel he found Vincent's story to be perfectly correct. Madame Vera had brought a child to the house on the preceding night—a little lame, pale-faced girl, who cried piteously, and was hurried out of sight by the French maid. And that morning the beautiful circus-rider had settled her bill, and departed with the aforesaid child and all her other belongings, including Jasper Hatton, who seemed to act as her guardian, on the seven o'clock express for New York. Hawkstone smiled grimly. It was rather late in the day for Vera to affect a guardian.

While the clerk was thus corroborating his own statements, Vincent stood drumming on the office-window with careless fingers.

"Of course you'll not rest, Prince Lucifer, till you recover possession of Bee?" he said.

"That goes without saying," replied Hawkstone, dryly; "but first I must send some dispatches before me, which may possibly result in the detention of my daughter by the proper authorities—at least they will reduce Madame Vera's chances of running the child off safely."

He went away to find the telegraph operator. When he returned, Vincent was still beating a tattoo on the window.

"Wish you would permit me to bear you company, Prince Lucifer," he cried, "and share in the hunt—would like to see Madame Vera's little game played to the end. It was the fellow Hatton who bagged the child for her. That poor devil, Gabriel Ravenel, she has utterly thrown over, you know."

Hawkstone's stern lips tightened.

"I know nothing about it! Thanks, Vincent—I am familiar with Madame Vera's ways, and shall be able to rescue my daughter without your assistance."

"You mean that you can't tolerate my company, eh?" drawled Vincent, with a lance-like gleam in the corners of his blue eyes. "Well, then, let me walk to the train with you."

They went down the steps of the hotel, and off along the elm-shaded street.

"When you return to Whithaven with the child," said Vincent, "I hope you'll be generous, old man, and permit me to go down with you to the Tempest."

Hawkstone frowned.

"Your audacity, Vincent, is worthy of admiration! Before you ask that favor, give me other proof than words that you are really anxious to wipe out your past misdeeds."

Vincent bit his lip, and laughed.

"I will! When you return you'll hear unexpected things of me—'pon honor, you will! I'm not altogether incorrigible. Just now, you remember, I was speaking of that idiot, Gabriel Ravenel. You see, I am cursed with an unlucky fondness for play." Hawkstone frowned

again. "Well, I've encountered the fellow at the gaming-table tolerably often. He's been hiding all along in Whithaven. Wild horses, no, nor the fear of the gallows, wouldn't drag him from the place while a chance remained of seeing Zephyr here. Last night we met again in the usual way. He played like a lunatic—he's going all to pieces of late—got fleeced to his last cent—had some valuables about him, but lost those also. For your sake, and—and Miss Ravenel's, I couldn't see him left in the street, or at the police station, so I took him to my boarding-house and hid him there. Of course, he's likely to be apprehended at any moment. He's sick, too, as well as penniless — a desperate, half-delirious spectre of a man. Don't know what's to become of him, I'm sure; but now that Zephyr has left, perhaps 'twill be possible to send him out of the country. Wonder what he's done with all the loot he abstracted from old Sutton! Plainly he can't make up his aristocratic mind to use it."

They had reached the depot by this time. Hawkstone paused and looked hard at his cousin.

"Is this true?" he demanded.

"'Pon my soul it is!"

He thrust a roll of banknotes into the other's eager hand.

"Then keep Gabriel Ravenel at your boarding-place till I return, and use this money for his needs. I will then take him off your hands, and reward you well for the service."

"All right," replied Vincent, as he pocketed the notes. "Greatly obliged, I'm sure. Hope you'll come back speedily with the kid. Good-by and good luck, Prince Lucifer."

As the train moved out of Whithaven, Hawkstone glanced from the window of a drawing-room car, and saw on the receding platform the face of Vincent turned after the departing train with a look so evil, so full of vindictive hate, that he gave an involuntary start.

"Is that boy deceiving me again?" he thought, irritably. "Is he pondering new mischief? I am far too

lenient with him. It is my misfortune that I can never find the heart to punish him according to his deserts."

The train moved on.

Hawkstone leaned back in his seat, and dismissed from his thoughts the cousin whom he heartily despised, and therefore could not fear. Straightway his heart flew back to Tempest Island and the girl who had inspired him with the one tremendous passion of his life. With the recklessness of baffled love, he said to himself:

"'She's mine, and I will have her—
I seek but for my own.'

For years Fate has been keeping her for me, and not the angels above, nor the demons below, shall hold us apart now!"

Before him arose her face—pale, maddening, as when he had last seen it in the library at the Hall—the great eyes heavy with tears unshed, a passionate despair lurking in their soft darkness. A girl slender as a reed, and yet, in purpose, strong as steel! How he was to undo the mischief that Zephyr had done he could not quite foresee; but on one point he was sternly determined, and that was to marry Jetta Ravenel in defiance of all opposition, all scruples, all malice. Love, the omnipotent, should conquer everything. She loved him, and being not a Spartan, but a girl, with a girl's heart, sooner or later he felt that she must yield to the mastery of his passion.

With his arrival in New York, the torment of fruitless search began—search for individual atoms in the vast crowds of a great city.

No tidings of Bee awaited him there, although his telegrams had set in motion the power which is supposed to ferret out all solvable secrets, and arrest with Briareus hands the steps of evil-doers. The hotels, the outward-bound steamers, the offices of transatlantic companies, yielded not the smallest clew to the whereabouts of the child and her captors. The official whose aid Hawkstone had invoked said, quietly:

"No persons answering to the description of the party

have yet been seen or heard from, Mr. Hawkstone; but if these people are in the city, you will have news of them before many hours."

That they *were* in the city he could not reasonably doubt—that they would be found was equally probable, since Argus eyes were watching, here, there and everywhere, for a stout, dark man, a small blonde beauty and a pale, lame child. He must bear the torture of indefinite delay as best he could. With this purpose in view, Hawkstone set forth to cool his impatience among the crowds of the great thoroughfares. He had never been a doting father, but the thought of his child Bee in the power of Vera and Jasper Hatton goaded him now beyond endurance.

He panted to regain his daughter and fly back to Tempest Island. For hours he walked the streets, all his senses painfully alert. The echo of a child's voice, a carriage flashing by, with a little face behind the glass, some *petite* vailed woman darting by him on Broadway, a peal of mocking feminine laughter, set his pulses leaping more than once. All this was delusion, however—of Bee, and her fair, wicked mother he found no trace.

He dined at Delmonico's; then called a carriage, and started for the opera-houses and the theatres.

From one to another he hurried, searching with hawk-like gaze orchestra-chairs, brilliant tiers of boxes, balconies aglow with color, and starting whenever, in the long curves of lighted stalls, his eyes chanced to alight on a fair face, a milky throat, a head of soft yellow curls. At midnight, weary, baffled, exasperated, Hawkstone retired to his hotel, and there poured out his heart in a letter to Jetta Ravenel—a wild, vehement letter, yet how feebly it shadowed forth the tempest within him! In despair at the impotency of words, he started up, at last, and thrust the sheet into a gas-jet. As he did so—yes, while he stood watching the flame reduce all that passion and pleading to a pinch of gray ashes, something stabbed through him like a Soudanese spear—a premonition of evil, mysterious, inexplicable. The ear of his spirit heard suddenly the wash, wash of salt leagues of boisterous

water, the rustle of the dead October leaves on the terrace at Tempest Hall, and then came the voice of Jetta herself, full of desperate need, calling to him from far away:

"*Basil! help, oh! help!*"

Verily he heard it! It hovered in the air above his head—the whole room palpitated with the horror and despair of it.

"Jetta," he answered, wildly, "where are you? What has happened?"

His only reply was the noises of the street outside. He rushed to the door—looked out into the corridor. All was silent there—it was an ugly fancy. Jetta was safe at Tempest Hall. How could she be otherwise than safe in his own domain, surrounded by his servants? He laughed at his momentary weakness.

"With all this infernal business, I am growing as nervous as a woman," he thought; but he went immediately and telegraphed this message to Miss Ravenel:

"Is all well with you? If you need me, answer at once."

No answer came, for Jetta Ravenel's eyes never saw the message.

The second day of the search was a repetition of the first. The silent hunt went on, but Argus eyes discovered no Vera, no Bee, no Jasper Hatton.

At noon of the third day the officials before mentioned said to Hawkstone:

"I fear you are on the wrong track. It is my belief that no such parties are in the city, nor have they escaped by foreign steamer or other line of exit."

The same suspicion was taking form in Hawkstone's own mind. He had been duped, deceived, misled. He went back to his hotel to make ready for immediate departure, and found awaiting him there the following strange message from the woman when he was vainly pursuing:

"Since my revenge is accomplished, come back from your wild-goose chase! I have not been out of Whithaven. You were directed to New York only that I might obtain a little time. Would

you learn something of Bee? Then, at seven o'clock to-night, come to the gray church in Whithaven Square. It will be our last meeting on earth.

VERA."

CHAPTER XXVII.

JETTA SPEAKS AGAIN.

"MISFORTUNE on misfortune, grief on grief!"

An hour or two after Basil Hawkstone started for Whithaven to search for his daughter, Mrs. Otway slipped on the oak stair at Tempest Hall and broke her ankle. A painful accident, and at that particular time it seemed doubly unfortunate to us all.

Harris, who knows something of surgery, set the bone, and in the absence of the master of the house we did our utmost to make his faithful old servant comfortable.

"Another disaster!" she said to me, with a dismal groan; "and I have a presentiment, my poor child, that more are to follow."

"Do not talk of presentiments, Mrs. Otway," I answered, sadly. "Surely our present realities are enough to bear."

She was not the only person at the Hall who had fallen into bad spirits. A shadow hung upon the whole house. Even the servants wore grave, anxious faces. Bee's two nursemaids, Anne and Sarah, went about with eyes as red as a rabbit's. And what can I say of myself? All my *châteaux en Espagne* had tumbled into unsightly ruin around me in the brief space of a night and a day. As yet I dared not face the future. My word was pledged to remain at Tempest Island till Hawkstone should return; then I would hasten back to Madame Moreau's school and seek employment again as a governess. How I was to endure life with the weight of memories that would now be pressing upon me, I trembled to think. But, then, the necessity for prompt action remained—I must go.

I sat by Mrs. Otway's bed until she fell asleep. By that time day was far spent—darkness began to gather on the tossing sea and the bleak island moors. Leaving Anne to watch in my place, I stole to my own room, and

proceeded to pack my trunks as noiselessly as possible. I wanted to be quite ready to depart when Hawkstone should appear. My heart was very heavy about little Bee. If her father should fail to find her—if she had been carried beyond his reach by her cunning, cruel mother, what would be the poor child's fate? I missed her clinging arms, her little voice. With leaden feet I moved about the chamber in the Autumn dusk, gathering my belongings together. The flaming sword had been drawn, and Eve must leave her Paradise to return to it no more.

The house was very still. I heard no sound anywhere, save the strokes of a clock in the hall, and the occasional opening and shutting of doors in the direction of Mr. Sutton's room, where Doris Rokewood was also preparing for departure—she had told me at dinner that she could not bear to remain longer on the island—Bee's strange disappearance had utterly unnerved her.

The room was very dark by the time my preparations were completed. I crouched on the floor beside my open trunks for a space, thinking many dreary things; then, with a heavy sigh I arose to light a lamp. For some moments I groped about, but could not find a match. As I stepped out into the corridor to call a servant, I became aware that something strange had happened.

The door of the cedar chamber, at the end of the passage, stood ajar, and through the opening a light streamed. The chamber of tragedy!—Hawkstone's chamber, for he had occupied it ever since his return to the island. What servant had dared enter that room in the master's absence? With an indignant thrill I flew to the door, and pushed it wide open.

"Who is intruding here?" I demanded.

No voice answered. At first glance I thought the room was empty, but as I turned toward the huge, four-posted bed, I discovered a human figure stretched along it, rigid and motionless. I went forward, wondering. It was my brother Gabriel!

His face was upturned in the light of a lamp that burned on the mantel—drawn, wasted, ghastly; under

the coffin-lid it would never be paler! His eyes were closed—I could not tell whether he breathed or not. Gabriel, lying in the cedar chamber at Tempest Hall, only a few feet from the man whom he had robbed and assaulted! Who had brought him to this room?—for I felt sure that he had not come of his own volition.

I touched the hand which hung over the side of the bed—it was cold and lifeless.

"Gabriel—oh, Gabriel!" I was about to cry from my full heart, when I heard the door creak. I turned, and saw Vincent Hawkstone standing at my side.

"I was looking for you!" he said, significantly.

His flushed, reckless face bore signs of fresh dissipation. Plainly his habits had not improved since his exile from the island. I drew back, and said, indignantly:

"Basil Hawkstone forbade you to come again to the Tempest without his permission. Was there no one among his servants faithful enough to oppose your entrance into this house—into this particular room?"

He smiled. The old stubborn passion leaped straightway into his eyes, and confused and exasperated me.

"Yes," he sneered, "that dotard Harris tried to interfere, and I knocked him down. Your good friend, Mrs. Otway, is helpless for the present, and the rest of the lot dare not meddle with Prince Lucifer's heir. Ah, you owe me a kinder greeting, Jetta, for I have done my utmost to serve you and yours to-night."

He made a gesture toward the figure on the bed. My heart gave a dismayed leap.

"So this is your work?" I gasped. "What does it mean, Vincent Hawkstone? Why have you brought my brother *here?*"

He caught my wrist, compelling me to lift my reluctant eyes to his wild, flushed face.

"It means," he answered, impressively, "that for a day and a night I have been hiding Gabriel in Whithaven—all for your sweet sake! It means that the officers of the law began to press him so closely that I was obliged to get him out of the place. I knew of no better refuge for a hunted man than Tempest Island; and Prince

Lucifer being absent, I determined to brave his displeasure — all for your sake, too !— and bring Gabriel down to our old sea-nest for shelter and safety."

I looked at the helpless figure on the bed, with the closed eyes and sunken face, and gasped, "He is already dead !"

"No," answered Vincent, "he has fallen into some sort of stupor. I now deliver him into your hands, Jetta —he is your brother—save him or not, as you please."

I did not comprehend him in the least. I tore my wrist away, and said :

"Oh, why did you bring him *here*? George Sutton is in the next room."

"Yes," he answered ; "how very awkward !"

I looked in his cruel, handsome face, and I knew that I was caught in a trap.

"Surely, Vincent Hawkstone," I cried, "you are not wicked enough to deliver Gabriel to his enemies !"

He smiled grimly.

"I am very wicked, Jetta—incredibly wicked ! Whether I deliver him to his enemies or not depends entirely upon yourself. I tell you his life is in your hands, not in mine."

A terrible fear stabbed through me.

"Speak plainly !" I said ; "let me know the worst."

He advanced a step nearer.

"Jetta, I wish to make terms with you, if possible—I even wish to save Gabriel, poor devil !—but I have a price for my services, and it must be paid."

"What do you want ?" was all that my pale lips could utter.

"The same thing for which I have long importuned you," he answered. "*Yourself !* You have settled with your conscience, and, properly enough, that you can never be the wife of Prince Lucifer. Well, since he is disposed of—and be hanged to him !—marry me in his stead, and I swear to you that I will save Gabriel !"

I could not speak—I could scarcely breathe.

"Ah, Jetta !" he murmured, tenderly, "your beautiful face betrays you. How pale it is—how full of de-

spair! You have decided that you can never be happy—your conscience will not permit it. Then be generous, and sacrifice yourself to your unfortunate brother. It will be something, will it not, to save Gabriel from the shame of public trial—from long years—perhaps a lifetime—behind prison-bars? Consent to marry me, and I will put him aboard a yacht this very night, and send him across the Atlantic; refuse, and I give him up at once to the man in the next room!"

Yea, I was within the trap! I flung myself on Gabriel's motionless body. What passed in my heart at that moment words of mine can never tell. The voice of Vincent, somewhere near, went on:

"Make your decision; there is not a moment to lose! Is it not true that you have decided never to marry Prince Lucifer while his wife Vera lives?"

I shuddered, but remained silent.

"Then betwixt yourself and him you must put a barrier which he cannot surmount, otherwise what safeguard have you against his iron will—his resolute passion? He will follow—he will importune you, he will take you by force, maybe—it runs in the blood of the Hawkstones to do such things!" with a low laugh. "If you would really save yourself from another woman's husband, Jetta—if you would save this idiotic boy from the fate of a common felon, you must marry me. God is my witness that I'll not spare him on any other condition!"

I felt a sudden faint quiver of life in Gabriel's body. His hollow eyes unclosed. I sprang up from the bed, and he recognized my face as I leaned above him.

"Jetta!" he muttered, remorsefully. "Poor little sister!"

Then he raised himself on one elbow, and stared with a terrified air around the cedar chamber.

"Where am I?" he said.

"At Tempest Hall," answered Vincent Hawkstone, airily. "Cannot you remember? The officers of the law were after you at Whithaven, and I was forced to fetch you to the island. You are sick, you know, and you lost your last cent at the gaming-table——"

"Yes, I lost it to *you!*" groaned Gabriel. "You won everything." His eyes dilated with deadly fear. "Great God! why did you bring me to Tempest Hall? That man—Sutton——"

"He is in an adjoining room," answered Vincent, with great *sang froid*; "but I have laid your case before Jetta. If she consents to marry me, you are safe—if she refuses, George Sutton is divided from us by only a partition, and you must prepare to face him like a man."

Gabriel leaped from the bed like a hunted creature. Already he seemed to feel prison-walls closing upon him. Wan, haggard, frenzied with fear, he cast himself at my feet, clasping me about with imploring arms.

"Jetta," he cried, hoarsely, "you promised—that night by the dials in the garden—that you would stand by me in a crisis. Save me now, or I am lost! For the love of God, put yourself betwixt me and the man I have wronged! I will not live to look again in his face—I will not live to be arraigned as a thief—to suffer the penalty of my crime. Vincent Hawkstone has no mercy. I am in his power, as you see—we are both in his power, but you can save me, if you will. Remember your promise, redeem your word——"

"Oh, hush, Gabriel," I prayed, driven to the verge of distraction. "Oh, my poor darling! I will do anything—sacrifice anything for your sake. It cannot matter now—nothing can matter—since life is no longer dear to me—since all its possibilities are over. Do you not know my heart? Yes, yes, my promise shall be redeemed at any cost. Oh, speak low, or Mr. Sutton will hear us——"

He was very weak. In an instant his head, once so lofty, so handsome, fell forward on my breast. I tried to hold him, but he slipped down to the floor—a senseless weight.

"He has fainted!" said Vincent, roughly. "Deuce take the coward! He is likely to die of simple fear."

He lifted Gabriel by main force, and laid him back on the bed, then turned to me, and the blood mounted high in his face.

"Do you consent to marry me, Jetta?" he demanded.

"Yes," I answered, feeling like a leaf in some mighty maelstrom.

"Then make ready!" he cried.

"*When?*" I asked, and he, looking me full in the face with wicked, shining eyes, answered:

"Now—this very hour!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JETTA STILL SPEAKS.

I MADE a faint show of resistance. "Impossible!" I cried; "I cannot marry you now—this hour!"

"Not at all impossible!" answered Vincent Hawstone. "I came here to-night prepared for emergencies. In my pocket is the license, and below-stairs waits a clergyman whom I brought with me from Whithaven. You know him—he officiates occasionally at the island church. I will have no delays!"—and his voice grew savagely authoritative—"you cannot put me off, Jetta—it must be now or never!"

I looked at Gabriel stretched senseless on the bed, then at the man into whose cruel hands Fate had delivered me, after all.

"You are false—you are evil!" I panted; "how do I know that you will keep your word and save Gabriel?"

"Is it probable," he sneered, "that I would deliver the brother of my wife to disgrace and punishment? To me, Gabriel is simply the means to an end. When the end is accomplished, Jetta, the means I will consign to your tender keeping."

I stood in apathetic despair. Why should I shrink from this sacrifice? Since I could never be the wife of Basil Hawkstone, why should I care what became of me? Surely no anguish—even the giving of my hand to Vincent—could equal that which I had already experienced in the renunciation of the lover that I loved.

"Come with me as you are, Jetta," said Vincent; "I cannot allow you time to make yourself like a bride. If I give you opportunity to think, your sisterly affection

will begin to wane, and then, ten to one, you will leave Gabriel to his fate, for I know only too well, that you abhor me. We must go down-stairs—will you let me take your hand?"

I think the face I turned upon him was stern even in its pallor.

"No!" I answered; "do not dare to touch me. I will follow where you lead."

He glanced uneasily toward the bed.

"Leave Gabriel as he is; he will revive all in good time," he muttered; then we went out into the corridor, and Vincent Hawkstone locked the door of the cedar chamber, and put the key significantly in my hand.

I descended the oaken stair. The two maids, Anne and Sarah, stood in the hall, apparently much frightened. At sight of Vincent they fled.

I entered the drawing-room. A wood fire burned on the hearth, and a tall candelabrum on the mantel above. The Whithaven clergyman was there, walking up and down the apartment with the gravity peculiar to the cloth. He observed me sharply; I must have looked very unlike the conventional bride; perhaps he saw some startling contrast betwixt my white, despairing face and the flushed, triumphant one of my bridegroom. As Vincent Hawkstone drew the license from his pocket, the reverend gentleman turned to me and said:

"Am I to understand that you enter into this marriage of your own free will, Miss Ravenel?"

For an instant I seemed to see a door of escape open before me; then I thought of Gabriel, and answered: "Yes, of my own free will!" And so my fate was sealed.

I do not know what happened next—I was like a person stupefied. I stood in the light of the candelabrum, and saw, "as through a glass darkly," the terrified faces of the servants peering in at the door, witnessing my sacrifice. Some strange words were said over me; I heard, but did not comprehend them. Somebody held my hand like a vise—I tried vainly to draw it away.

"Too late!" hissed Vincent Hawkstone in my ear; "you cannot escape me now!"

Then I heard the Whithaven clergyman say :

"I pronounce you husband and wife !"

I could scarcely refrain from a peal of laughter. It could not be I who had deliberately married this wild, bad Hawkstone, whom I both despised and detested ! Surely I must be mad or dreaming ! Vincent turned to the clergyman, and said :

"The boat is waiting to take you back to Whithaven."

Those commonplace words broke the spell that bound me. I tore my hand from my bridegroom's, and flew back up the stair—to the cedar chamber and Gabriel.

He lay as I had left him. I knelt by his side.

"Oh, my dear," I groaned, "I have saved you, but at an infinite cost !"

After a few moments I heard some voices in the porch ; Vincent Hawkstone was going down to the wharf to see the clergyman off.

I looked around that fatal room.

There Philip Hawkstone had been assassinated ; there his second wife had died ; there I, wretched, despairing, knelt by my guilty, perhaps dying, brother. And all about me were the tokens of Basil Hawkstone's recent presence—gloves, riding-whips, Oriental weapons in curious inlaid sheaths ; a compass used in his desert wanderings ; a branch from that forest of palms which now marks the site of ancient Memphis ; sketches in and about Cairo ; a portrait of Bee ; an Egyptian dagger thrust into the leaves of a book. I shuddered to look at these things. What would he say when he heard of my marriage with Vincent ? As this appalling question arose in my mind, I became aware that steps were advancing along the passage. I sprang to turn the key in the lock—a precaution which I had forgotten on my entrance—but before I could do so the door flew violently open. I found myself standing face to face with George Sutton.

Every drop of blood in my body seemed turning to ice. I flung myself before Gabriel.

"Stand back !" I cried, wildly, as the yellow, withered man—the bilious, hot-tempered man whom my brother had injured beyond forgiveness—came straight up to the

four-posted bed. "You shall not have him — I have bought him with a price!" And I spread my arms to hold Sutton back.

His lean face put on a strange look.

"My poor child, what have you done?" he cried.

Before I could answer, Doris Rokewood appeared on the threshold. She ran to me, and at once clasped me in her arms.

"Anne, the maid, told us!" she gasped. "Oh, Jetta, say that you have not married that man—say that you could not do such a strange, mad thing!" Then, as she caught sight of Gabriel, I thought she was about to faint. "Look, guardy — *he* is here!' she almost shrieked. "Look! he is *dead!*"

"No," answered George Sutton. "Not dead, Doris—pray be calm. You frighten his sister."

She wrung her hands.

"How changed he is! One can see that he has suffered unutterable things! Do not shrink from us, Jetta—do not spread your arms over him in that way! We are his friends—not his foes. You cannot think we wish to harm him!"

"Mr. Sutton must have justice!" I cried; "you are deceiving me. The officers of the law are on Gabriel's track."

"Speak to her, guardy!" implored Doris, wildly; "what put such things in her head?"

George Sutton laid his thin hand on my arm, and spoke as follows:

"You are talking rubbish, Miss Ravenel! There are no officers on Gabriel's track. True, I *did* threaten that the law should take its course with him—even employed a private detective, named Radnor, to hunt out his hiding-places. But I have a soft heart—too soft, by far!—and the boy was of my own blood—my last living relative—he had been bewitched — I could not hold him wholly responsible for his crime. I hesitated to bring him to public disgrace. Doris, too, pleaded for him—she is a fool, like all of her sex. Hawkstone, also, begged me to spare him, and, in his love for you, went so far as

actually to insist upon making full restitution to me from his own purse."

I gave an involuntary cry.

"Oh, my love, my love!" my heart wailed within me.

"Now, Miss Ravenel," continued Sutton, "I've a bit of news to tell you. To-day my banker telegraphed me that an express messenger had delivered to him a box, containing the bonds and money which Gabriel Ravenel stole from my safe at Newport. The boy, it seems, had a conscience, after all, for he could not bring himself to use a dollar of his booty. And with my restored property came a letter, in which he penitently acknowledged all his misdeeds and begged my forgiveness. Sampson," he added, "who went to Whithaven with Basil Hawkstone, brought the message on his return. I now see that I should have sent Doris to you at once; but, unfortunately, we both supposed you to be ignorant of Gabriel's crime."

Miss Rokewood was clinging to the tall, carved bedpost, her pale face averted from the man who had once been her lover.

"Yes," she faltered. "And we thought it best to wait till Mr. Hawkstone should come back, and then put the matter in his hands."

I stared from her to George Sutton.

"But I married Vincent Hawkstone to-night solely to save Gabriel from *you*!" I cried. "I bought his safety with *myself*! I do not understand you, Mr. Sutton—I cannot believe you—I think I am going mad!"

"Vincent Hawkstone!" growled Sutton; "what the deuce had that fox to do with Gabriel's safety? Did *he* bring the boy here?" He leaned suddenly down to the bed—scrutinized Gabriel's unconscious face—felt the pulse in his wrist. "Evidently he has been drugged!" he said, sharply. "Come! what nefarious business is this, Miss Ravenel? Tell me everything."

I told him. His yellow face grew red with wrath. Doris Rokewood began to cry bitterly.

"I see!" said George Sutton. "Miss Ravenel, you are the victim of some vile plot! Vincent Hawkstone

knew very well that Gabriel had little or nothing to fear from me."

"Have I, then, sacrificed myself in vain?" I cried.

"Yes," he answered, pity struggling with rage in his voice, "utterly in vain! The scoundrel got wind of his cousin's absence and seized the opportunity to perpetrate this outrage. Possibly the abductors of little Bee were his assistants—at least, there seems to be something more than chance in such lawless proceedings following close on the disappearance of the child and Prince Lucifer's departure."

"Oh, what is to be done?" sobbed Miss Rokewood.

"Heaven only knows!" answered Sutton, gloomily. "Though divided from you by only a partition, Miss Rokewood, my ward and I never dreamed of your peril. Not till Anne knocked at the door and told us that you had been forced into some sort of marriage ceremony did we suspect that anything was wrong in the house."

They had come to my help just one-half hour too late! Overwhelmed with a great despair, I looked down at poor Gabriel.

"I have married Vincent Hawkstone for naught!" I muttered, like one stupefied. "I believed his lies, and I have married him!"

"Guardy," cried Doris Rokewood, "let us leave the Tempest this very moment, and take Jetta, and—and—Gabriel with——"

She did not finish the sentence, for the door swung suddenly back, and Vincent Hawkstone stepped into the cedar chamber.

Sutton turned to meet him with a furious air.

"Liar and coward!" stormed the little yellow man. "You deserve to be shot for this night's work! If Miss Ravenel will honor me by putting herself in my care I will see that she suffers no more at your vile hands."

Vincent looked disconcerted, but only for a moment.

"My dear sir, you will ruin your liver with such absurd violence!" he answered, airily. "By what right do you interfere betwixt husband and wife? Miss Ravenel has married me of her own will—let her deny it if she

can!—and being in my care, she certainly has no need of yours. For this night, at least, *I* am master of Tempest Hall, and I must request you, George Sutton, not only to retire from this room, into which you have, with gross impudence, intruded, but also to leave the house without an instant's delay! Some of the islanders will be ready to take you over to Whithaven immediately. Now, sir, go, or I shall not hesitate to throw you out!"

Sutton's thin face blazed, but he knew that he was powerless to help me. He stalked up to my bridegroom and shook his weak fist in that sneering, reckless face.

"Your usurpation of authority here will be brief!" he cried. "Your cousin will know how to deal with you. If Miss Ravenel wishes me to go I will go—if not, here I stay; and she has my assurance that I will defend her to the best of my ability."

In Vincent's face I saw something which made me tremble for George Sutton's bodily safety. I stepped between the two.

"Go, Mr. Sutton," I said. "Gabriel cannot be removed in his present state, and I shall stay with him. Besides"—and something wild and hot blazed up in my heart—"I promised Basil Hawkstone that I would not leave Tempest Island till he returned, and I must keep my word. I need no defender, for I am afraid of nothing here—least of all"—and I flashed one withering look at Vincent Hawkstone—"this reptile!"

Miss Rokewood kissed me and whispered:

"Courage! We will find Basil Hawkstone in Whithaven, and send him to your help."

Then the door closed on the last of my friends; I was alone with the man I had married.

Slowly, surely, the insolent glow faded out of his face. His bold eyes fell before mine.

"Whatever you may think of me, Jetta," he said, sullenly, "you are my wife, and nothing can part us now but death."

"You have lured me into a form of marriage," I answered, "but your name I will never wear, and your wife

I will never be! What have you done to my brother here?" He shrugged his shoulders.

"There's nothing serious the matter with Gabriel—he'll come out of that stupor directly."

"You robbed him at the gaming-table!" I cried; "you drugged him, and brought him unconscious to Tempest Island, that you might entrap me through my love for my brother. How I hate—how I loathe you for it!"

He grew red, then pale.

"By my soul, Jetta, you are rather hard on a fellow, whose greatest sin, after all, is loving you too much. Don't look at me like that—the end justifies the means, you know. I'm half afraid of you when you get your Southern blood up."

"You may well be afraid of me!" I panted, "for there is murder in my heart to-night!—yes, more than was in the woman who crept into this cedar chamber long years ago and stabbed Philip Hawkstone while he slept!"

I had espied the Egyptian dagger 'twixt the uncut leaves of a book on a table near me. My hand crept toward it—seized it quickly.

"Great God! Jetta," he cried, aghast, "what would you do?"

"Yonder is the door," I answered, pointing with the deadly little blade, "through which you just sent George Sutton. What you said to him then, I now say to you—*go!* If you do not want to look upon a tragedy which will surpass all others in the history of the house—go!"

I cannot tell what he saw in my eyes. A guilty person is always a coward. He backed away from me involuntarily.

I heard a muttered curse, as he stumbled over a chair in the way. Then the door closed. I ran and turned the key in the lock, and went back to Gabriel.

CHAPTER XXIX.

JETTA STILL SPEAKS.

He lay without motion—seemingly without breath. I made no attempt to restore him. Bitterly I reflected that

it would be well if both of us could die, then and there. All night long I sat by his side, and heard the clock tick, and counted the interminable hours as they dragged on. The horror of that vigil I shall never forget on this side of the grave.

Morning came, and Sarah, the maid, crept to my door, and knocked softly.

"Oh, dear Miss Ravenel," she sobbed, "are you there?"

"Yes," I answered.

"May I come in, miss?"

"No. You can do me no good, Sarah. Has Mr. Sutton left the house?"

"Lor' yes; last night he was turned out shameful, miss, and Parker and Miss Rokewood with him. Mrs. Otway is wild about you—says she will get up and come to you here, but she can't do that, for her ankle is dreadful. Shall I bring your breakfast, miss?"

"No; I do not care for breakfast. Where is Vincent Hawkstone?"

I shuddered as I pronounced the name. Sarah answered, dryly:

"He's been drinking wine in the drawing-room all night, and is quite helpless at present, and will be, I should say, for hours to come."

Sarah departed, and I resumed my watch by Gabriel. So long as he remained unconscious I would not leave him. By-and-by he would recover from the effects of Vincent Hawkstone's drugs, and learn that he was pardoned—that he had nothing to fear from George Sutton; and then he would take me under his protection—he would stand betwixt me and the man who pretended to be my husband. My life was now as bankrupt as his own—in all the world we had nothing left but each other.

Noon came. Again Sarah crept to my door, begging me to take a little food, and again I sent her away. As the afternoon shadows lengthened in the room, I began, at last, to feel the exhaustion of so many sleepless hours combined with poignant fear. I put my weary head down

on the pillow beside Gabriel, and, in spite of all my efforts to continue conscious, I fell immediately asleep.

When I awoke, the cedar chamber was dark. I groped my way to the table and lighted a lamp. Then I turned to look at the bed, and my heart leaped into my throat. Gabriel was gone!

I rubbed my eyes. Was I dreaming? No. While I slept he had risen and departed—left me alone and without a word. The door was unlocked. He had simply turned the key and gone out noiselessly—whether in delirium, or in the full possession of his senses, I had no means of knowing. If the latter, fears for his personal safety had probably urged him to flight; and, as he could not possibly know the dire distress into which I was plunged because of him, it was not strange that he should desert me.

The hands of the clock on the mantel pointed to seven. I listened. The house was very still. In a moment my mind was made up.

I ran to my own room, threw on my outer garments, and, fearful of being discovered and intercepted, crept stealthily down the oak stair, out of Tempest Hall and through the horseshoe gate and into the island road.

To whom should I go in this my hour of desperate need? Both Harris and Mrs. Otway were powerless to help me now. I determined to take refuge with Peg Patton in her Inlet House.

I flew down the tawny slope, and over the salt dunes with the familiar song of the sea in my ears, and all around me shadow and desolation. Never did any sight appear more welcome to my eyes than the "Old Woman," rearing her red column near the entrance to the wooded creek. I turned into the forest path. As I stumbled along through the salt pools and over the projecting roots of trees, I heard of a sudden, a singular sound near at hand—the steady, vigorous thud, thud of a spade in the wet earth. I followed the noise, and came directly to a spot on the border of the creek near to the brown house.

Here the moonlight wavered and trembled through the

gloom of thickly braided branches, and the water gurgled mournfully in the frost-bitten reeds ; and here, too, under a spreading tree, I found Peg Patton alone in the night, digging a strange, sinister-looking hole in the ground.

She was down in its depths, throwing up spadeful after spadeful of brown earth - I could see her upraised arms, like fine bronze, and her head bound with a red cotton handkerchief.

"Peg!" I called. She lifted her dark face over the uneven brink. "Peg, I am in great need. Will you give me shelter at your house?"

She scrambled out of the hole and dashed down her spade. Her scanty skirts were turned up from her bare ankles, the fresh mold clung to her hands—she wiped them quickly on her apron, and faced me.

"Is it true, Jetta Ravenel, that you have married the wildest and worst of all the Hawkstones?" she cried.

"Yes," I answered, "I have married him."

"Then 'twas by foul means—never by fair!" she said, looking at me closely in the moonlight. "Will I give you shelter? Yes, that I will—come with me."

She started for the house. I followed. She hurried me into her living-room and bolted the door, then uncovered a bed of red coals on the hearth, and heaped it high with driftwood. The friendly warmth and light, the sudden sense of security, overcame me for a moment. Peg placed me on a settee, and held a cup of water to my lips.

"I see," she said, dryly, "you are in great trouble. Have you tasted food to-day?"

I shook my head.

"Food would choke me, Peggy."

"Pooh! you are faint with fasting. Unhappy folks must eat to sustain life, as well as other people. Sit here and rest while I get your supper ready."

Immediately a fish and a pan of potatoes were frying on the hot coals, and a pot of bubbling coffee perfumed the room. Peg said nothing till she had ministered to my bodily wants, then she began :

"Why do you start and turn pale at every sound girl? Is any one pursuing you?"

"I do not know," I shuddered.

"Tell me the whole story."

"Vincent Hawkstone spread a net, and I fell into it!"

"Tell me *all*."

I told her, in a dull, unmoved voice, as though I was relating the woes of another instead of my own.

Peg took her pipe from the mantel and lighted it at the fire.

"I wish to the Lord that I had never interfered 'twixt you and Basil Hawkstone, if *this* is the outcome of it!" she growled. "Better that you should have married the master, in spite of the circus-woman, than this devil-may-care Vincent! No doubt your brother got away from the island as soon as he came to his senses—there are always boats at the landing-place. Well, you shall stay with me till the master comes back, and I'll defy even Vincent Hawkstone to take you from this house against your will."

She pulled gloomily at the pipe for a few moments, then continued:

"God only knows what that young scoundrel may do if his cousin doesn't appear soon! The islanders have lived so long under a Hawkstone that they seem afraid to lift hand or voice against one of the name. Besides, Vincent is the heir. You see, Miss Ravenel, this Tempest is a little world in itself, and, in a measure, out of reach of help; for fearful things might go on here, and no one on the mainland be the wiser, so long as boats were kept away from Whithaven. Did you see what I was doing when you found me out in the woods to-night?"

"Digging a grave!" I said.

"Yes—come, and I will show you who is to fill it."

Peg took up the lamp, and we went down the passage to the room of Hawkstone's mad mother. There, on a low couch, I saw something lying, like spotless Parian—the whitest, most unearthly thing my eyes ever rested on—Philip Hawkstone's murderess. Her eyes were closed,

her moonlight hands lay peacefully on her breast. A long garment, white as hoar-frost, covered her slender body, and her wonderful hair, like raveled white silk, had been carefully arranged in massive braids. It needed but one glance to show me that she lay there, not in sleep, but in the pathetic majesty of death. I started back and looked at Peg. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Yes, she is dead!" she said, simply. "Last night I missed her, and about the time Vincent Hawkstone was forcing you into marriage, I found her lying by the rock of the Old Woman—lying with a smile on her lips, and her hands full of sea-shells, and the tide foaming up at her feet. As you look at her now, Miss Ravenel, you must forget what she did long years ago. I've often thought she exhausted all the evil in her on that one deed, for she's been like an angel ever since. For more than a quarter of a century I've tended her faithfully in this room; but, as you see, my work is over now. There she lies—the poor, wronged, mad wife of the man I once loved!"

"And you were digging that grave for her?" I asked, wondering.

Peg nodded.

"I fancy she would not rest in the Hawkstone tomb. They did not want her in life—they shall not have her in death. I have made her ready with my own hands. I have dug her grave with my own hands. I shall bury her myself; she would not like to have other service than mine, I'm sure, because mine is a s rvice of love."

Amazed at the tenderness in the hard brown woman's voice, I could only say·

"And her son?"

"I am keeping her like this till he comes," answered Peg. "He will let me do as I like—he will not deny that she can sleep better under the tree by the creek than up yonder with the dead Hawkstones."

Peg bent and smoothed the great plaits of pale hair, then covered the dead face with reverent touch, and we went silently back to the living-room.

"When Mr. Basil comes we will bury her secretly."

said Peg; "as secretly as she has lived for the last eight-and-twenty years. Now I'll put up the shutters, Miss Ravenel, and you'd better go to bed, for you look clean beat out. Sleep while you can, for Vincent Hawkstone won't leave you unmolested many hours."

I knew this only too well. Peg opened an adjoining bedroom, and bade me lie down there. I threw myself, still dressed, on the bed, and presently the brown woman stretched her muscular body, like some big watchdog, on a mat by the door. She was soon asleep, but I lay with wide-open eyes and senses all alert, listening to strange noises outside the house—the wind soughing in the Autumn wood, the stealthy movement of wild things in the frosty brake, the distant bark of a fox, the far boom of the sea, breaking on a sunken reef.

CHAPTER XXX.

PEG AT THE HALL.

About the middle of the night a man rode up to the door of the Inlet House, and beat upon it with both fists.

"Peg! Peg Patton!" he shouted. "Open, you she-pirate!"

But the she-pirate failed to appear. He spurred up and down, and round about the place; he thundered at the threshold, he banged on the shutters. The silence of death reigned. Peg's house was her fortress, and a tolerably secure one, too. With curses loud and deep, the man cried:

"Is Jetta Ravenel in there, Peg? I have married a wife and lost her! Come, wake up, woman, and help me in the hunt."

The echoes alone replied.

His brain was still full of the fumes of liquor; he had been drinking madly for twenty-four hours. He put his horse's head to the nearest shutter, with some vague purpose of spurring through, when suddenly a hoarse, stern voice called from within:

"You have no wife, you young reprobate! Be off, or I'll put moonlight through you! Is Basil Hawkstone

dead, that you have taken possession of Tempest Island?"

An iron bar, thrust out through the window, struck the horse violently, and sent him galloping down the forest path, with his drunken rider clinging about his neck in a state of savage bewilderment.

"Prince Lucifer *dead?*" he muttered. "No; but, by Heaven! it's time for him to die! If he comes back to the Tempest alive, he'll make short work of *me!*"

Nothing further occurred to disturb the peace of the Inlet House that night. When morning dawned, Peg prepared breakfast for herself and her guest; then she said to Jetta Ravenel:

"I'm going up to Tempest Hall to see what that man is doing there. Dare you stay here alone with the dead till I come back?"

"It is not the dead that I fear, but the living, Peggy!"

"Well, bar the door after me, and don't open it again till you hear my voice outside."

With that Peg Patton stepped out into the day, and set her face grimly toward Tempest Hall.

In the great grain-fields the harvesters were moving about at their labors; sheep and cattle grazed on the tawny moors; the fishing-boats were out—life seemed to be going on at the island in its usual grooves. With her grim, grenadier stride, Peg mounted the slope to the horseshoe gate and looked over into the garden.

A flock of pigeons cooed in the sun about the old dials; in vague disquiet the dogs whined in the stone porch. Not one of the servants was visible. Presently she heard a shuffling step in the lane behind her, and turning, saw Joe Derby. He looked terrified and demoralized.

"Oh, Lord! Peg Patton," he cried, "there's strange things going on here this morning! Mr. Vincent has been out about all night, looking for the governess that's run away, and he's as mad as a March hare. Bless you, he's locked Harris in the granary, and taken all his keys and accounts, and what he'll do next nobody knows—go off in delirium tremens, most likely, for one thing, as he's drinking at an awful rate."

"Why did you let him land on the Tempest?" demanded Peg, sternly. "You had your orders from the master not to receive him here."

Joe looked discomfited and shaky. He rubbed his sunburnt ear and sighed.

"Lor', Peg, Mr. Basil was gone, and afore any of us knew it, here he was, rampaging around, ordering us as if we were dirt. And being a Hawkstone, nobody but Harris dared say a word. He were always a dare-devil sort—were Mr. Vincent—and at present he's that wild no man can hold him."

"You coward!" snorted Peg; "why didn't you help Harris?"

"Lor'," said Joe, in an aggrieved voice, "women have no logic. Mr. Vincent walked into Harris with a six-shooter. Who was a-going to interfere *then?* He said the money and keys were his'en — he's got 'em, anyway!" resignedly. "And Mrs. Otway, she can't move a step, and the servants are afraid of their lives. He's threatened us all with fire and slaughter if we don't find Miss Ravenel. All last night he was a-tearing round the island looking for her, and ruining Mr. Basil's best horses. My advice to that young lady is to make tracks for the mainland as quick as maybe, for the Lord knows Vincent Hawkstone is bent on mischief."

"You coward!—you coward!" repeated Peg, in a passion. "A nice lot of servants you and your mates are! What is Basil Hawkstone going to say to all this precious deviltry?"

"Well, it ain't safe to go a-flying in the face of Mr. Vincent," he grumbled; "for, if anything happens to his cousin—and who knows where Basil Hawkstone has gone or when's he's coming back?—young cock-o'-the walk will enter into possession here—being the heir—and what then? I was born and reared on the Tempest—I ain't a-going to be turned off it at my time of life."

"If Basil Hawkstone serves you right, when he gets back he'll pitch you neck and heels into the sea!" cried Peg. "Shame on ye, I say! Where may Mr. Vincent be at the present time?"

The dejection on Mr. Derby's countenance deepened.

"Hanged if I know! Somewhere inside, most likely. It won't do for *you* to meddle with him, Peg—he'll knock you over as quick as he did Harris."

"Follow me!" said Peg, shortly.

She stalked through the stone porch into the main hall, opened the library-door and looked in.

The grand old room wore a disordered appearance. The table was strewn with papers, rolls of money, and account-books. At a cabinet stood Vincent Hawkstone, rummaging among his cousin's private effects, opening letters, spying into corners. He was splashed with mud from hard riding—he was red and wild-eyed with hard drinking. He started guiltily as Peg opened the door. His handsome, dissipated face grew dark with wrath.

"You she-pirate, what do you want here?" he cried.

She gave him a look that made him quail.

"The last that I heard of you, Vincent Hawkstone, you had been ordered from this island—outlawed—forbidden to set foot here again. How is it that you are back, as soon as the master leaves it, working all sorts of mischief—breaking, entering, assaulting, robbing—not to mention that marriage business with Miss Ravenel? You traitor, you thief! You'll be jailed at Whithaven when the master comes back!"

With an oath, he dashed down his papers, and caught up a chair, as if to fell the bold creature. But she was too quick for him. Before he could comprehend her purpose, she seized him in a tremendous grip, hurled him to the floor and planted her knee on his breast. In the brawny hands of this prodigious woman, Vincent Hawkstone, man though he was, found himself a pygmy, a mere child.

"Joe Derby!" she called.

Joe looked in at the door, and grew pale.

"Bring me a strong rope!" commanded Peg.

Joe's cowardly old legs fairly bent under him, but he dared not refuse. He brought the rope.

"Oh, lor', Peg, whatever are you a-going to do?" he quavered.

"Bind him. If you had possessed the pluck of a cat you might have done it yourself."

"By the great horn spoon, this is bold business, Peg!" groaned Joe.

She kept one hand on Vincent's windpipe—with the other she held him flat to the floor.

"Put the rope round his legs, Joe!"

Joe obeyed. In a twinkling he was bound hand and foot. Peg drew the cords mercilessly tight—he could not move an inch.

He glared up at his captor with furious eyes.

"Wait till I get free," he said, softly, "and I will burn the Inlet House over your head!"

Peg snapped her fingers in scorn.

"Better save your wind, sir, to make explanations to Mr. Basil. The rope is strong, and here you must lie till your cousin comes—whether it be for one hour or four-and-twenty! I hope to the Lord he'll shoot you dead when he hears of your marriage with Jetta Ravenel!"

She snatched up a bunch of keys from the library-table, and went out with Joe Derby, and locked the library-door, followed by a storm of curses from the man on the floor.

"Look here, Joe," said Peg, "which of these keys belongs to the granary? Go and let old Harris out before the rats eat him. Tell him to get back his master's account-books and money as quick as he can, and let nobody go near the library while Vincent Hawkstone is there. I've clipped the wings of your bird for you; now keep him—d'ye hear?—till Prince Lucifer comes."

"Yes, Peggy—yes, old gal—you be a rum one, sure enough!" quavered Derby, in stupid wonder.

Peg went first to the kitchen, where dire confusion reigned.

"A precious lot you are!" she cried, glowering in at the frightened servants from the door; "not one of you worth the salt that's put in your porridge, to stand by, and see such things done here, and raise no outcry against the evil-doer!"

She mounted to the chamber where Mrs. Otway

crippled and helpless, lay bemoaning the fate of her favorite, Jetta Ravenel.

"She's gone, Peggy—nobody knows where!" cried the unfortunate housekeeper at sight of the brown woman. "Perhaps she's drowned herself off the rocks. I tried to send word to the mainland, but Vincent Hawkstone would let no person leave the island. It all happened under this roof, and yet I was powerless to help her, Peggy—it distracts me to think of it!"

"Be calm, ma'am," said Peg, dryly. "Jetta Ravenel is at my house, safe and sound, and there she will stay for the present. What's become of her brother who was fetched to this island by Vincent Hawkstone?"

"We do not know," answered Mrs. Otway. "Sarah went to the cedar chamber last night, and found it empty. Vincent had been drinking himself helpless for hours; but he roused up about midnight, and began tearing up and down, and ordering us all from our beds to look for Miss Ravenel."

"I've settled *him* for a space," said Peg, grimly. "He's down now on the library-floor, bound hand and foot, and he's going to stay there till Basil Hawkstone appears. The servants are so demoralized, you must go below, Mrs. Otway, and keep them in hand till matters mend."

She snatched the housekeeper up in her brawny arms, carried her down-stairs, and put her carefully on a sofa, calling Anne and Sarah to attend her.

"Here you can keep an eye on the whole household, Mrs. Otway," she said. "As for me, I must hurry back to the Inlet—it isn't safe to leave Miss Ravenel there alone. If anything further goes wrong, I'll be again to the fore. But, please God, if it's possible, we'll have the master back by sunset."

With that she stalked out of the house, and round to the granary. Joe Derby had liberated Harris, and got him home to his cottage, where the old overseer had gone off straightway in an apoplectic fit.

"He'll never be any good again—see if he is!" said Joe, dolefully. "Mr. Vincent has finished him."

Peg at that moment espied Sampson, the boatman, advancing along the road, and hurried to meet him.

"Sampson," she said, sternly, "you were always a trusty man, which is more than can be said of some of these islanders," with a contemptuous look at Joe. "Be off to Whithaven as fast as wind and tide will take you, and if Basil Hawkstone is there, bring him back in your boat; and if he's gone further, telegraph him that he must come with speed. You know the need, man. Be lively, now—you haven't a minute to lose!"

"Lively it is, Peg!" answered Sampson, cheerfully. "I'll find the master—never fear," and down the slope he went to the landing-place.

Peg, with a parting injunction to Mr. Derby to mind his eye, and let no living creature go near the library, followed the old boatman.

Joe, at the horseshoe gate, gazed after the two till they vanished.

"She's a whole handful—is that Peg!" he muttered; then he shuffled into the garden, and, led by a fatal curiosity, drew near to the library-window, and peered in at Vincent Hawkstone lying on the oak floor, bound hand and foot—helpless as a fly in a web—vanquished—made captive by a woman. As Derby's shadow darkened the pane the prisoner turned his prostrate head, and his eyes met the islander's.

"Joe!" he called, in a persuasive voice.

"Well, sir?" faltered Derby.

"Come in here and cut this rope!"

"Lor', sir—I can't! I'm afraid!"

"Joe Derby, cut this rope, I say, and be quick about it, too! I shall be lord of Tempest Island some day—then I will remember you. If you refuse, I'll shoot you dead the moment I am again a free man."

"Oh, sir! Lor', sir! you do go on dreadful!"

"Make haste! I've a hundred dollars in my left-hand vest-pocket, Joe—take it, it is yours!"

Derby's hand clutched the window. There was a moment of suspense, then he slowly raised the sash and scrambled through, hanging his head in shame.

"Out with your jackknife!" commanded Vincent.

He was frightened beyond measure—too frightened, perhaps, to fully understand what he was about.

"Look here, Mr. Vincent," he faltered, "will you behave like a gentleman, and go peaceably away from the Tempest, and leave what doesn't as yet belong to you, if I do this thing, which, Lor' knows, I oughtn't to do?"

The handsome, lawless face, prone there in the dust, put on a wicked, mocking smile.

"Try me and see, Derby, but don't keep me waiting! That she-devil drew the rope so tight it cuts me like a sword. There! you have your knife out—now open the blade, you cowardly blackguard! My wrists—free my wrists first!"

And Derby, groaning at his own weakness, bent down, with knocking knees, and severed the cords that held Vincent Hawkstone!

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE INTERVIEW.

In a certain secluded street of Whithaven, behind a high wall and an immensely tall evergreen hedge, stood a small, dilapidated cottage, that looked like a hermit retired from the world.

Somebody had died there under strange circumstances a few years previous, and from this, or some other cause, the place had fallen to ruinous neglect and decay. House-hunters shunned it, open lots bounded it—neighbors were few. The street outside the shaky wooden gate was little traversed—dullness and solitude clung to the whole vicinity. Nobody cared to peer through the unpruned evergreens, or disturb the reign of moths and cobwebs behind the closed shutters of the house. And yet, on the night which followed the events of the last chapter, a man came to the shaky wooden gate and knocked long and furiously—yea, like one who knew that somebody on the other side could give him admittance.

After a while he heard a sound of light feet along the

mossy flags of the walk, a hand pushed back the rusty bolts that held the gate, and a smart French maid in cap and apron confronted the visitor.

"I want to see your mistress, and immediately!" said the man.

"*Allons, monsieur!*" And the maid shot the bolts into place, and then ran on before, and ushered him into a damp, moldy litt e parlor, where a fire was making ineffectual attempts to warm the chilly atmosphere—a mean, musty parlor, lighted by oil-lamps.

Vincent Hawkstone looked around with an amused laugh.

"Good Heaven!" he cried, stumbling in a hole in the moth-eaten carpet and barely saving his head from sharp contact with the chimneypiece; "does your mistress enjoy the retirement of this charming place, Celende? Does she really mean to stay here long?"

The maid shrugged her shoulders.

"Monsieur, it is barbarous! Rats, mice, spiders, dust! Madame is a heroine, but to-night will end it all, surely."

Then she went out, and Vincent Hawkstone began to pace back and forth across that dangerous carpet, with the sweat of nervous fear starting out of his forehead.

"I have gone so far that I cannot turn back now," he muttered, under his breath. "If this woman does not help me to-night I am lost!"

The swish of a silken train, the tap of high heels, and Mademoiselle Zephyr entered.

She raised her pretty eyebrows as Vincent rushed to meet her.

"By my soul, Zephyr, my fair sybarite, you have found a cheerful hiding-place!" he cried. "Prince Lucifer, keen as he is, would never discover you in this dismal den. Did Dudley bring you my letter?"

"Yes," she answered. "He also told me that you were amusing yourself at the island. *Merci!* how haggard and queer you look!—not at all like the new-made bridegroom. I fear Jetta Ravenel has not taken kindly to that sudden change of husbands."

The sullen blood arose to the roots of his hair.

"Plague take her obstinacy! The *ruse* that you proposed, mademoiselle, was successful—she fell into my net, but she ordered me out of her presence as though I had been a dog, and then ran away altogether from Tempest Hall."

Zephyr sank into the nearest chair, and broke into a ringing laugh.

"How delightful—for you! Ah, I am quits with that girl, at last! At last she is recompensed for daring to win Basil Hawkstone's heart! But what brings you here to-night, Vincent? You ought to be pursuing your lost bride. Did you wish to find a sympathetic ear in which to pour your marital grievances? It is now six o'clock"—glancing at a timepiece on the mantel—"and at seven I have an engagement that cannot be delayed. I will give you just ten minutes in which to unbosom yourself—not a second more."

He came close up to her chair, drawing his breath hard. The desperate fear in his face was very unpleasant.

"You and I, Zephyr, have entered into an alliance against Prince Lucifer—our common enemy. I come to remind you of it. To tell the truth, I am in a deuce of a scrape, and you must help me out."

"You have committed unpardonable sins in Basil's absence—eh?" she smiled. "When he comes back to the Tempest, and finds how matters have gone in his absence, he will show you no mercy?"

"Too true!" groaned Vincent. "And because he has forgiven me so many times in the past, he is all the more likely now to overwhelm me with the vials of his wrath."

"You are afraid of him?" she said.

"Mortally," he acknowledged.

"And fear makes cowards of us all," sneered Vera. "Well, without doubt, you *will* be made to smart for taking possession of Tempest Island and all upon it, before your time had lawfully come." Again she glanced impatiently toward the clock. "Time flies, Vincent. I have important business on hand, and you are keeping me from my toilet."

He took a fresh turn across the moth-eaten carpet, coming back to her, however, like the needle to the magnet.

"Have you forgiven Prince Lucifer his scorn of you?" he said, hoarsely. "Have you forgotten that you once entreated him on your knees to love you again, and he refused?"

Her smiling little face changed.

"I forget nothing," she answered, shortly.

"Your heart has not softened toward him? You hate him as much as ever, Vera?"

"I hate him *more* than ever! Why do you ask such absurd questions?"

"Look here!" cried Vincent Hawkstone, roughly; "I fancy you have some private game of your own afoot, Vera. However that may be, one thing is imperative—Prince Lucifer must never return to Tempest Island *alive!* You have sworn to help me—now keep your vow!"

She looked up at him with soft, deriding eyes.

"How tragic you grow! I have recalled Basil Hawkstone, you know, from his chase after Bee, and appointed a tryst with him to-night in Whithaven—not from caprice, but deep design. Undoubtedly he is on his way from New York at this very moment; at any rate, he will be sure to appear at the time and place named by me."

He started nervously.

"A tryst!—*to-night*, Vera?—before he goes down to the island?"

"Yes. How wild and strange you look! Do you wish to *kill* your cousin?"

"Yes," replied Vincent, deliberately; "I wish to kill him, for I have no safety but in his destruction!"

"Pooh!" she scoffed; "high tragedy may be fascinating, but it is also dangerous, and after a while it becomes a trifle tiresome. Come, what have you done with that troublesome fellow Gabriel? Is he still at the island, whither you carried him to assist at your nuptials?"

"No, he made off from the Tempest as soon as his wits returned," answered Vincent, gloomily. "Heaven only

knows where he is at the present date! No matter—he has served his purpose. I take it you never cared a rush for him?" She lifted her lovely eyebrows.

"I have had many admirers in my day, but never one that I found so intolerable as that boy. What I am to do with him I cannot tell." She arose with an impatient gesture. "Really, I must not spare you another minute, Vincent! By this time Celende is quite wild. As I said before, your cousin will be in Whithaven to-night. I shall meet him in another place, but he will follow me here, to recover his daughter. We shall probably have an interesting interview." She made an eloquent grimace. "I will permit you to be present, if you like."

He grew pale.

"Heaven above! Do you think I mean to risk a personal encounter with Prince Lucifer! What! confront him face to face? Not I! You must put me behind the door!"

"You wish to stab him in the dark, then?"

His cowardly eyes would not meet her bright, derisive gaze. He looked straight down at the floor.

"You pledged your word to help me, Vera," Vincent grumbled.

"Have I not done so?" she answered. "You could never have married Jetta Ravenel but for my aid. My dear ally, make any little arrangement with your conscience that you like—*n'importe*. I am quite willing to oblige you. At eight o'clock, remember, you will find Basil Hawkstone at this house."

He stood for a moment grimly meditating.

"At eight sharp, I will be here," he muttered, then took up his hat and withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DEATH.

The New York Express rumbled into Whithaven that night a half-hour behind time.

The first passenger to alight was Basil Hawkstone—

weary and dust-stained from the most fruitless and exasperating search that a man ever pursued.

As he walked out of the depot the chill, salty wind of the street met him, like a breath from his island home. The moon was rising on the harbor, and scattering her first level rays into the elm-shaded town. In the busy thoroughfares echoes of traffic and toil still lingered.

Hawkstone turned from street to street, and approached a quiet square, overlooked by a gray stone church. Yes, this was the place—a queer one, certainly, for a woman like Vera to select! He had tasted her treachery too often not to feel his suspicions stir now.

The door of the sacred edifice stood open—a light shone through—something was going on within. She meant to meet him in the porch, maybe. As he stepped into the shadow he came face to face with a man who was leaning against the carved stone there, with a broad-brimmed hat drawn low over his face.

"Have you business in this particular spot, sir?" demanded Hawkstone.

The man gave a violent start.

"Stand off!" he cried, in a thick voice, which Hawkstone recognized as belonging to Gabriel Ravenel. Out of the porch he dashed, and down the steps, vanishing instantly in darkness.

"Poor simpleton!" muttered Hawkstone. "Plainly he knows that Mademoiselle Zephyr is expected here to-night. The moth hovers persistently in the candle that has already scorched his silly wings."

He looked into the vestibule—it was empty; into the church itself. The only person visible was a sexton of ancient and melancholy aspect. He motioned Hawkstone to enter.

"The lady will be coming shortly, sir," he said, with a solemn smile. "I am instructed to tell you to take a seat."

Hawkstone thought this very odd. He had scarcely expected to find a church open and lighted for what Vera called their last meeting on earth. Full of doubt and wrath, he sat down.

"It is some new trick of the enemy!" he thought.

Did she really intend to meet him? Judging from her past conduct, the chances were against it. He seemed to be the only living thing in the place. Even the old sexton had disappeared. The pews stretched in empty rows around him — the pulpit was vacant. He found something ominous and oppressive in so much space and silence.

Suddenly Hawkstone became aware that another person had entered the church, and was slipping noiselessly into a seat on the opposite side of the aisle. He looked. It was Gabriel Ravenel.

The boy was as pale as ashes, yet perfectly composed—indeed, he had the careful, orderly appearance of one who had prepared himself for some supreme occasion. He did not see Hawkstone, but kept his handsome head bent, as though his gaze was turned inward, not outward.

Had Mademoiselle Zephyr called him, also, to this place.

"By my soul! he, too, seems to be waiting for her here!" Basil Hawkstone said to himself, with fresh indignation.

Seven o'clock struck in the church-tower.

At the same moment a peal of music burst from the organ-loft. There was a noise in the vestibule. The door swung open. Yes, she was coming! She had not deceived him, after all—she was advancing along the aisle—but how, and with whom?

In point lace and shimmering *duchesse* satin, orange-flowers in her crushed yellow curls, and on her corsage, one tiny hand on the arm of that dark, heavy-faced Englishman, Jasper Hatton, who walked at her side. Down the aisle went the twain—lovely, sylph-like woman in a foam of dazzling white — swarthy, thickset man, with narrow, exultant eyes.

Hawkstone stared after them blankly. Gabriel Ravenel stared also, and there was something in his pale, boyish face not good to see.

Joyfully pealed the wedding march from the loft. A clergyman and witnesses entered by a side door—the

former stood at the foot of the pulpit-stair and received the twain.

Verily, it was a wedding to which the beautiful circus-rider had summoned her divorced husband! In that Whithaven church, she was actually marrying Jasper Hatton — the man who had persistently pursued her across continents and over seas for many a year. After doing her utmost to part Hawkstone from Jetta Ravenel, she stood there before his eyes, uttering marriage vows for the second time!

He could have laughed aloud. What would his poor unhappy darling at Tempest Hall say to this? Surely her scruples must vanish now — her struggles against their mutual happiness cease! Mademoiselle could not dream of the weight she was lifting from his heart—of the unspeakable relief and joy that filled him, as he sat and listened to that brief, impressive ceremony there at the pulpit-stair.

Thank God! it was over! They were husband and wife! They were coming back along the aisle—drawing near to Hawkstone. Already her great eyes, full of malice, had sought and found him — already the old mocking smile was dawning on her red lips, when lo! in the opposite pew, like a death's head at the ancient Egyptian banquets, Gabriel Ravenel started up. Never on earth would Hawkstone forget his face.

He sprang into the aisle, in the very front of the bridal pair.

They heard him cry out, "Did I not say that when you played me false, it would be time for one of us to die?"

Then a sharp report rang through the church, there was a puff of gray smoke, and in the path of the fair woman who had duped and deceived him—so near that his blood might have sprinkled her wedding garments—Gabriel Ravenel fell prone and motionless with a bullet through his brain.

Vera uttered a shriek and sank into the arms of Jasper Hatton, who carried her straight out of the church.

The sexton and the clergyman rushed to the fallen

man. Hawkstone opened his vest. Vera's boy lover, who had squandered for her sake honor, fortune and friends, lay stone dead in the way which her wicked little feet had traversed from the altar to the church-door.

"Curse her!" muttered Hawkstone, looking down on the pale young face, so changed and wasted, and on which the dignity of death was fast settling. "She has done her work, and done it well!'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A GLASS OF WINE.

A HAND touched Hawkstone's arm; a strange man stood by his side.

"There's a carriage waiting at the door for Mr. Basil Hawkstone," he said. "Be so good as to come with me, sir—Mrs. Hatton wishes to see you in another place."

"She wishes to see me? By Heaven! I wish also to see her!" said Hawkstone, through his teeth, and, stern as Fate, he followed the man.

At the foot of the church-steps a close carriage stood. Madly intent upon finding Bee, and tearing the child from Zephyr and Jasper Hatton, Hawkstone leaped inside the vehicle, and was driven rapidly away through the moonlit streets of Whithaven.

The strange driver stopped at a wooden gate, behind which a tumble-down cottage stood, guarded by rows of unpruned evergreens. It was the house where Vincent Hawkstone had visited Mademoiselle Zephyr two hours before.

"Push back that gate, sir," said the driver, "and knock at the door."

Hawkstone, who could no longer feel surprise at anything, followed these instructions, and found himself on the threshold of the cottage, face to face with the French maid Celende, who had promptly opened the door at his approach.

"Enter, monsieur!" she said, and Hawkstone strode into the musty, moth-eaten parlor, which was warmed

and lighted, but empty. As he towered in that damp, moldy room, looking darkly, indignantly around him, and wondering why he had been lured to such a rat's nest, a door swung open, there was a limping step, a little cry, and Bee herself was in his arms—Bee, his lost daughter, whom he had pursued for three bitter, miserable days. Trembling, and full of sobs, she clung about his neck.

"Oh, papa, papa!" she cried; "have you come for me at last? Take me back to Tempest Island — quick— quick!"

And then followed the soft sweep of satin and lace, an odor of orange-flowers saluted his nostrils, and Vera, still in her bridal fleeces, stood before him, with the old, defiant, dare-devil light in her blue eyes.

"Did you enjoy your visit to Gotham?" she began, in the taunting tone that he knew so well. "Very sorry, I am sure, to have led you such a vain chase, but I could think of no other way in which to gain a little time. Look at this house! Consider what I must have suffered, hiding here for three dreadful days! It required nerve, did it not, to exchange my luxurious rooms at the Eagle Hotel for such squalor and ruin? But something of the sort was necessary to mislead you, don't you see?"

His child was safe in his arms, and only a few miles of moonlit water intervened betwixt him and Tempest Island. What mattered the malicious tricks of this woman now?

"Madam," he muttered, dryly, "you have led me a long chase, but not a vain one, since I find my daughter at the end of it. I shall take good care that Jasper Hatton does not abduct her again. For the pleasant surprise which you planned for me in Whithaven church tonight I thank you! You did me a greater service than you knew when you stood there and married that poor fool Hatton. Did he find it pleasant to walk out of church with you over the dead body of a rival? Farewell, madam. Look your last on your child, for, as the Lord liveth, and as my soul liveth, you shall never see her again!"

She broke into a wicked little laugh. Her derisive eyes shone softly, the odor of the orange-flowers on her breast confused and sickened him. Never had she looked so dazzling, so dangerous.

"And did you think I really wished to keep Bee?" she purred. "Why, the very night we carried her away from the island I was tempted to push her out of the boat before we reached Whithaven. Troublesome little thing! I am glad to wash my hands of her—glad to return her to her fond papa, for she has wept, and sulked, and tormented me incredibly since her capture. She loves that girl Jetta Ravenel—talks only of her, which is enough, of itself, to make me hate the child! If she had inherited my beauty I might have bred her to my own profession, but why burden myself with a plain, crippled little creature like this? No. All my attempts to secure her have been made solely to torment you. Never has she possessed the smallest value in my eyes save as an instrument to vex and annoy *you*. Take her back—do!—to her dear Miss Ravenel, for whom she has constantly lamented during her stay here."

She had just seen one of her victims dead at her feet, but she could laugh, she could sneer—she could vivaciously reveal her true sentiments concerning poor little Bee, as the latter clung whimpering about Hawkstone's neck.

"You tell me nothing that I did not know before," he answered. "I never gave you credit for the smallest amount of maternal love. In this matter you have been simply amusing yourself at my expense—is it not so?"

She shook her yellow head.

"No; I had a deeper design than amusement, and but for the fact that I was obliged to sail for Europe in a few hours, I would have led you, Basil Hawkstone, the length and breadth of the whole continent before I undeceived you and restored Bee! To-morrow I go abroad to fulfill professional engagements—I shall never return to America; but you will hear of me at Berlin, at Vienna, at St. Petersburg; and I shall take with me something sweeter than fresh fame, or the gold it brings

—the knowledge that I have parted you for ever from Jetta Ravenel!"

The angry blood leaped hot in his veins—the scar of the spear on his cheek throbbed and burned

"Your boast is premature, madam," he answered, sternly; "without doubt, you played your little game to your own satisfaction—you posed at Peg Patton's Inlet House for a wronged and loving woman, bereft of her child, and Miss Ravenel believed you. For a little while you shook the foundation of my happiness. But to-night Mrs. Jasper Hatton has clipped the wings of her own malice—refuted her own lies—to-night you have not parted, but restored—given back to me my nearest and dearest, without whom I can have no life, for I shall go from this place straight to Tempest Island and marry Miss Ravenel before the week is done!"

Something in his words—in his splendid, contemptuous face exasperated her beyond endurance. She clutched at her satin corsage, crushing the orange-blossoms with merciless fingers. The sweetness of their shattered petals gave Hawkstone a sudden vertigo. He staggered back a step, and turned his face from the hateful, overpowering odor.

"And do you think," hissed Vera, "that I would have married Jasper Hatton till I made a success of my plans—till my work was accomplished, my vengeance secured? No! no! You two are parted for ever, I tell you, and I have done it—*I!* Go back to Tempest Island, but be sure that you will not marry your Southern beauty when you arrive there!"

"Fortunately the wife of Jasper Hatton has no longer power to hold us asunder—let her rant as she may," sneered Hawkstone.

Eye to eye they stood in that old moth-eaten room, and the child Bee felt something sinister in the air and began to tremble.

"The sick man Sutton—your guest at Tempest Island—has been trying to find you in Whithaven," said Vera, slowly. "He has news for you!"

"Sutton!" echoed Hawkstone, visibly startled.

She smiled wickedly.

"Possibly he left letters for you here, but if so, they have fallen into the hands of your cousin Vincent. All these things will be explained to you when I am on the sea. Basil Hawkstone, I might have given you up peaceably to some other woman, perhaps, but to Jetta Ravenel —never! I hated her brother for her sake. He killed himself to-night for love of me—bah! I was wondering how I should dispose of the young idiot, and he has very opportunely settled the question for me. When I sail to-morrow for the Old World, it will be with the knowledge that I have satisfactorily finished all my affairs on this side of the Atlantic."

Was it the smell of the orange-flowers that turned Hawkstone so giddy and faint? The musty little room spun suddenly round before his eyes—so did the fair, cruel face of that woman in bridal white—he fell helplessly into a chair.

"Papa!" screamed little Bee; "oh, papa!"

Vera ran to a door at the other end of the room, and almost stumbled over a man who was bending down there with his ear to the keyhole.

"What's the matter with him?" hissed Vincent Hawkstone.

"He is fainting," answered Vera. "Send Celende, or Jasper Hatton, with a glass of wine!"

Scowling darkly, Vincent looked into the room, at the powerful figure, helpless in the chair.

"Perdition!" he muttered; "I've been waiting here ever since you two began to talk—couldn't make up my mind to open the door—was afraid he would strike me dead at a blow. There! up with a window, and hold your vinaigrette to his nose. I will bring the wine." With these words, he left the room.

She raised the nearest sash. Before Hawkstone showed any sign of consciousness, Vincent reappeared with a glass in his hand. He looked pale and shaken.

"Take it quick," he cried, hoarsely, "and let him drink it every drop. I didn't call Hatton—he might find the situation deuced awkward—don't you know? Faith

Prince Lucifer is reviving! I think I'll step outside and put a bullet through my brain, as Ravenel did in the church to-night."

She took the glass.

"Poltroon!" she sneered, and shut the door promptly upon him, and stood motionless and meditative for a moment with the wine in her hand.

She glanced first at the long-stemmed glass, and then at little Bee, who clung terrified to her father, spreading two thin, weak arms over him by way of protection.

"Do you want to hurt my papa?" the child demanded, with painful directness; "you must not give him that stuff—I cannot let you."

The mother's eyes fell before the daughter's.

"Very well, little Bee, we will throw it away, then!" she answered. "One must draw the line somewhere, and I confess that I have had enough of tragedy for one night." She went straight to the open window, and flung out both the glass and its contents. "In the days to come," she said to the child, "your papa will never dream that he owes his life to you, but"—shutting close her little white teeth—"before God he does!"

Directly Basil Hawkstone opened his eyes and got upon his feet, bewildered and shaken.

"There is something wrong with my head to-night," he muttered. "Be so good as to put on the child's outer garments, Mrs. Hatton, and we will trouble you no longer."

She called Celende, and Bee was dressed for the street.

"I wonder, will she remember this three-days' visit?" with her mamma?" smiled Vera, maliciously. "Farewell, Basil Hawkstone. I must make ready for to-morrow's voyage. If I thought there was a fresh torment that I could devise for you, I would not go; but the crowning blow has been given—I could do nothing worse, if I pursued you for a century—so, farewell for ever!"

"Oh, papa! come—come quickly!" urged little Bee.

In an indistinct way he saw her standing there in that low, musty room, her rich draperies trailing, the light of

the oil-lamps falling on her yellow hair and fair, mocking face—thus he remembered her long after. Then the cottage-door closed—on this side of the grave he would see her no more.

He was walking down the flagged path, under the funereal evergreens to the wooden gate, with Bee's faithful little hand locked in his own.

As they gained the moonlit street, the child began:

"I was thrown out of the pony-carriage with Miss Rokewood, papa, and a man picked me up and carried me in his arms through the woods, and we came to a boat where the lady in the white dress was waiting, and they made me go with them to Whithaven. I cried, and the lady boxed my ears, and stamped her foot at me, and oh, I wanted Miss Ravenel—I wanted *you*—I thought you would never come."

"Poor child, we are going now to Miss Ravenel," answered Hawkstone.

Once out of that secluded byway, he hailed a carriage, and was driven rapidly to the wharf.

The hour was waxing late, but he succeeded in finding both a man and a boat, and the wind being favorable, Hawkstone and his recovered daughter were soon dancing over the starlit water in the direction of Tempest Island.

Basil held the child wrapped in his cloak, sheltered against his breast, but he was not thinking of her. The face of Jetta Ravenel floated before his eyes, the voice of Jetta Ravenel filled his ears, as he had heard it on that night of his barren quest in a distant city. A foreboding of evil was upon him—a brood of strange, nameless fears oppressed his heart, like a nightmare.

"Great Heaven!" he cried to the boatman; "how slow we go!"

"Why, bless you, sir, we are flying!" answered the man. "There's another sail astern—left the wharf a little after us—it's not making half our speed, sir—look for yourself."

Hawkstone looked, saw a black speck on the far waves, and said: "It's rather odd that a boat should be following us at this hour, is it not?"

"Well, yes, it is, sir, when you come to think of it!" answered the man.

Presently, in the blue distance before them, a beacon began to blink, like a star fallen in the sea. Then the gray moors and headlands of the Tempest sprang into view out of the tumbled water. The boat glided up to the familiar landing-place. Hawkstone stepped ashore with his child, and dismissing the Whithaven boatman, turned to mount the slope under the russet-tinted trees.

As he did so Joe Derby came sneaking down the path with a guilty air. He stopped at sight of Hawkstone, and being somewhat defective of vision, called in an uncertain voice:

"Halloo! Is that you, Mr. Vincent?"

"Mr. Vincent, indeed!" thundered Hawkstone. "Are you expecting that villain here? Stand, Joe Derby, and give an account of yourself!"

But Joe was scarcely the man to "stand" under such circumstances. Every individual hair on his head arose in terror. His master was the last person on earth that he now desired to encounter. He took to his heels, like the discreet person that he was, and promptly vanished into the shadows of night.

"Hang the fellow!" muttered Hawkstone, and he snatched up his sleepy little daughter and hurried with her toward the Hall. She nestled against him, and said, drowsily:

"Cousin Vincent was in that house to-night with the lady, papa."

"Ah!" said Hawkstone.

"Yes; he was hiding behind the door!"

The ancient Hall stood dark and frowning in the moonlight as he approached it. Not a light was visible—not even the bark of a dog greeted the return of the island lord. Hawkstone strode into the porch, lifted the brass knocker, and sent an impatient summons into the far recesses of the house.

After some delay the door opened, and the frightened face of Sarah looked through.

"Oh, sir!" screamed the girl, at sight of Hawkstone

and the child, "you have come back!—you have brought Miss Bee! Lord be praised, sir! and Lord help you, too, I say!"

He pushed by her into the hall, looking around him sharply, anxiously.

"What ails you, girl? Have you lost your wits? Where is Mrs. Otway? Where is Miss Ravenel? Call both immediately."

Sarah fell back a step, and flung her apron over her face.

"Mrs. Otway, sir, is laid up with a broken ankle," she sobbed; "and Miss Ravenel—oh, Miss Ravenel is not here, sir—she'll never be here again! She's gone and married—oh, sir, it's God's truth! She's married Vincent Hawkstone!"

He dropped little Bee, and stood staring at the girl as though she had been the Gorgon's head.

"The night after you left," continued Sarah, "he came to the island and brought her brother with him; and oh, it's dreadful doings we've had here ever since, sir! She married Mr. Vincent in the drawing-room there—he got a clergyman from Whithaven, and I stood in the door and saw the ceremony with my own eyes. And then she ran away, unbeknown to any of us, and we haven't set eyes on her from that hour to this. You've come back none too soon, sir—we are all in fear of our lives from Mr. Vin——"

She saw him stand one moment, tall, terrible—more like an image in stone than a living man. He did not utter a sound. Motion, breath, life itself seemed suddenly stricken from him. Then, while Sarah was yet speaking he reeled, and went down like a log to the floor of the hall.

The girl's shrieks, combined with little Bee's, instantly brought every soul in the house to the spot.

"He's fainted!" gasped Sarah. "Who'd have thought it of such a strong man! I broke the news too suddenly."

Mrs. Otway, creeping on hands and knees to the side of her prostrate master, looked breathlessly into his rigid face—put one trembling hand on his heart.

"God have mercy on us!" she cried; "it is not a faint—it is *death!*"

A stealthy step sounded in the porch—a hand cautiously pushed back the main door.

Vincent Hawkstone peered into the hall—Vincent Hawkstone, who had followed his cousin's boat all the way from Whithaven.

"What's the rumpus here?" he asked, hoarsely.

"Oh, he's dead!" screamed Sarah, beside herself with fright. "Mr. Basil is dead!"

With a smothered exclamation, Vincent sprang into the midst of the terrified group. For a moment, indeed, he shrank and trembled; then he gathered courage, and, bending over the fallen man, examined him closely. When he lifted himself again, his wild face was all aglow with sudden, evil triumph.

"Yes!" he cried; "it is, doubtless, heart-disease—of the latent, unsuspected kind. Prince Lucifer is, indeed, dead, and I am now the master of Tempest Island!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

BAD TIDINGS.

From Tempest Hall, where she had left Vincent Hawkstone securely bound on the floor of the library, Peg Patton, with the stride of a victor, started back to the Inlet House.

At the landing-place she found Sampson ready to hoist sail for Whithaven.

"Remember, Sampson!" said Peg; "either you find Hawkstone, or you telegraph this whole business to him. Help of some sort we must surely have by sunset, man!"

"And help I'll bring you, or my name's not Sampson," answered the old boatman, cheerfully.

With that he went dancing off across the blue water. Peg stood and watched the catboat for a space, then hurried away over the dunes.

Before she had reached the entrance to the Inlet, a

black cloud, with edges of livid purple, arose suddenly and overspread the sun. A terrific squall of wind and rain swooped down upon the island, and sent the sea flying before it in foam-crests mountain high. Peg was glad to take refuge in the lee of the "Old Woman," where she waited while the rending, roaring tempest darkened the earth, and shook the tawny woods, and filled her stout heart with mortal fear for the safety of the catboat.

In vain her hawk-eyes searched the watery distance. Wild, swirling foam, a blur of blinding rain, shut out the view. Well, Sampson was a good sailor—the best on the island. He could be trusted to manage a boat anywhere. With this comforting reflection, Peg trudged on into the woods, in happy ignorance that the catboat had even then capsized in the gale and the old boatman Sampson would never again bear tidings, evil or good, from Tempest Island to the mainland.

By the time Peg reached her own door the brief tempest was subsiding.

She told Jetta Ravenel all that had transpired at the Hall, and that a messenger had been sent to bring aid from the mainland.

"I've fixed matters with Vincent Hawkstone," she said, grimly. "He'll not be likely to do any more mischief before the master comes."

Jetta Ravenel looked up with an unspeakable dread in her great dark eyes.

"And when he comes," she shuddered, "I must see him—I must stand face to face with him—God pity me!"

Peg answered nothing. She was more troubled at heart than she cared to confess. She went about, intent upon the comfort of her guest, but keeping a sharp lookout on the approaches to the house.

As the afternoon shadows began to lengthen, a boat glided into the creek, and two men brought to the threshold a wooden box, which was carried straightway down the passage to the room where Hawkstone's dead mother lay.

In the box was a plain casket, covered with black cloth, and in this, Peg, with gentle, reverent hands, laid the frail, white body.

"Now she is ready for her grave," said the brown woman to Jetta Ravenel. "If Sampson does his errand aright, we will bury her to-night. I have a prayer-book here, and her son will read the service over her."

Twilight gathered. The woods about the creek were growing dark, when some one came running up the forest path, and burst, pale and frightened, into the Inlet House. It was Sarah.

"Mrs. Otway sent me to tell you," she gasped, "Sampson's drowned! His boat has drifted in empty. And, oh, dear! oh, dear! Joe Derby—drat him!—went and cut Mr. Vincent's ropes, and let him loose, and now we're worse off than before, for what did young upstart do but go out with that dreadful Joe and smash all the island boats but one, and that he took and started for Whitehaven—to keep master from coming back to us, *we* think! He left Joe in charge of Tempest Hall, and you should see how the traitor is going on—ordering us all right and left, and not letting a soul leave the house. I've been watching a long time to get this chance to slip away to you."

Then the girl flew to Jetta Ravenel, and kissed her hands, and broke into lamentation over the dark days which had fallen on Tempest Island.

Peg stood scowling ominously.

"Joe Derby let him loose, did he?" she muttered. "I wish I had my hand on Joe's windpipe! He wouldn't play the traitor again in a hurry! Well, go back to Mrs. Otway, Sarah, and tell her not to worry about us; I've arms in the house, and powder and shot, and I'll be bound I can take care of Miss Ravenel for a while!"

Sarah went, and Peg Patton closed her shutters, bolted and barred her strong door, heaped her hearth high with driftwood, lighted her cob-pipe, and sat down with Jetta Ravenel to watch.

Hour after hour went by. Midnight was at hand. Jetta's shining head had fallen against the jamb of the

fireplace, her eyelids were growing heavy, when suddenly a strange sound came echoing down through the woods to the lonesome creek, and into the room where the two women kept dreary vigil. It was the tolling of a bell!

Peg's pipe dropped from her mouth. She started and listened.

Separate, slow, solemn—stroke followed stroke with heavy insistence.

"Heaven above!" cried the brown woman; "that's the bell of the church! It never tolls but for some disaster to the Hawkstones!"

Jetta sprang up, with her hand on her heart.

"Disaster to the Hawkstones!" she echoed, with whitening lips, and she ran and opened the nearest shutter.

The moonlight poured through in a pale flood, and that sinister knelling came with it, louder than before. Something dreadful had occurred at Tempest Hall, but *what?*

"Come away from the window, miss," entreated Peg. "You must not stand there. Some one outside may see you," and she drew Jetta hastily back. "Hark! I hear a step!"

There was a sound of hurrying feet in the dead leaves; then a voice cried at the barred door:

"Open! Oh, Peg Patton, do open, for the love of God!"

"It's Sarah again!" said Peg, and she drew back bolt and bar, and lo! the faithful nursemaid sprang into the room, with little Bee Hawkstone clasped tight in her arms.

Sarah was wild and white with terror.

"You've killed him, miss!" she said to Jetta Ravenel. "He came back from Whithaven, bringing Miss Bee, and when I told him you had married Vincent Hawkstone, he dropped dead inside his own door! Do you hear that bell? It's for him—it's for Mr. Basil that it's a-tolling! He's dead, and Vincent Hawkstone is master now of Tempest Island, as he always swore he'd be!"

With a scream of mingled grief and joy, Bee threw herself into Jetta Ravenel's open arms.

Peg seized Sarah, and shaking her vigorously, cried:

"What mad thing are you saying? Compose yourself, girl! Strong men, like Basil Hawkstone, are not killed by bad news of any sort—even the unexpected marriage of a sweetheart! Tell your story straight, Sarah—tell it straight."

"'Twas the shock of her marriage that snuffed him out like a candle!" persisted Sarah, wringing her hands. "A doctor from the mainland happened to be at Harris's cottage. He examined master, and said 'twas heart-disease fast enough, aggravated by a violent mental shock, or something like that.'"

"No Hawkstone ever died of heart-disease," declared Peg, sternly; "it's a lie!"

"I saw him die!" groaned Sarah; "I saw him laid out cold and stiff in the library—that's no lie, more's the pity! Mrs. Otway told me to take little Bee, and bring her to you—told me to ask you to hide the child, for the love of God! Her life isn't safe at Tempest Hall, now that Mr. Vincent is in possession. There's no telling what he may do, and nobody's left to protect the poor little thing."

"I'll take care of her," said Peg, decisively; "you did well to fetch her to the Inlet."

"Let me stay, too!" prayed Sarah; "you see I don't dare to go back after what I've done—he'll kill me as quick as not. Oh, what's to become of any of us, with Mr. Basil dead?"

"That's what I'd like to know," said Peg, thoughtfully. "Stay with us, girl, if you like—the house is large enough. But we must prepare for trouble. Vincent Hawkstone will burn the roof over our heads, maybe—he has promised as much."

In blank horror Jetta Ravenel stood staring at her two companions. Frightened by the look on her face, Peg rushed to her and cried out, sharply:

"Hold up, miss! It never could have been your marriage that killed him—I don't believe it!—I don't

believe it!" And she tried to sustain the girl in her own powerful arms.

Jetta Ravenel uttered a shriek so full of heart-break that it might have stirred even the pale corpse in the room beyond.

"Dead! Oh, Basil, my love, my love! *Dead!*"

She slipped from Peg's hold down to the floor, with poor Bee in her arms. And the two women, awed by the presence of a grief which they could not measure, drew instinctively back, and left her, motionless, voiceless there, with her white face prone in the dust.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE NEW MASTER.

In the library at Tempest Hall lay the island lord—he who had been called Prince Lucifer—stricken suddenly and mysteriously, like a strong tree by a thunderbolt, indifferent now to

"Hand of man or kiss of woman."

Scarcely had the sheet been drawn over his still, pale face, when Vincent Hawkstone appeared before the weeping household servants, his handsome, wicked eyes blazing with excitement, his joy disguised by no attempt at propriety.

"My day has come!" he cried. "Prince Lucifer is dead, and I am sovereign here. As soon as the burial is over I mean to discharge you all."

Mrs. Otway answered with dignity from the chair where she sat helpless.

"I am sure that few of the old family servants, sir, will wish to remain in your employ."

He flashed a glance over the group, and noticed at once the absence of Sarah and little Bee.

"Where is that nursegirl?" he demanded; and then, sharply, suspiciously: "Where is Beatrice Hawkstone?"

"I would rather not tell you," said Mrs. Otway. "It is best you should not know."

"What!" he cried, in a passion. "You have dared to send the child away—dared to assume control of her, without my knowledge? You thought I might be tempted to kill her, maybe?"

"You are no fit guardian for Miss Bee," answered the old housekeeper, resolutely. "She begged to go—she was afraid of you. Basil Hawkstone's daughter has rights on this island that you ought to respect, sir."

"Plague take you for an impudent meddler! *I* only have rights on this island—the circus-rider's cripple has none!" He let fall an oath. "Fortunately I know where she has sought shelter. Here, Joe Derby!"—Joe advanced reluctantly from the shadow of a door—"go down to Peg Patton's Inlet House and bring back the girl Sarah and Beatrice Hawkstone!"

With an inward groan Joe departed on his most unwelcome mission. Basil Hawkstone's death had quite upset the man. He was awed and frightened by the sudden visitation. His conscience pricked him sorely, too. And now, the thought of approaching Peg Patton, after his treachery of the morning, made the blood run cold in his veins.

All the way across the dunes Prince Lucifer's ghost seemed pursuing him. Again and again he looked wildly over his shoulder, expecting to see something supernatural there. The moan of the tide, the shadows made by the clouds racing across the moon, even the rustling of the dry salt grass, set him trembling with terror. Goaded forward, however, by a wholesome fear of Vincent Hawkstone, he entered the wood. As he tramped along under the trees, wondering how he was to face Peg, the solid earth suddenly gave way beneath his feet. His heels flew up and his head down, and Joe found himself sprawling in a deep hole, to which his own dimensions fitted with appalling correctness.

It was an open grave.

He gave a yell that made the forest ring, and pierced even to the living-room of the Inlet House.

"Peg! Peg! By the great horn spoon, she's dug it for me!—she's going to bury me alive, the old witch! Help

me out !" as the loose dirt rattled into his eyes and ears. "I'm nowise fit for the grave as yet—I haven't repented of my sins !"

"Then you'd better be about it !" thundered a voice, and he lifted his dirt-dimmed eyes and recognized Peg herself standing on the brink above him with vengeance written on her dark, frowning face. "Joe Derby, what made you go for to tempt Providence by showing yourself at this creek to-night ?"

"Lor', I didn't come of my own accord," faltered Joe. "Mr. Vincent sent me to bring back Sarah and the little girl."

He got upon his feet and scrambled out of the grave.

"Now, Peg, old lass," he began, in an apologetic tone, "don't you glare at me in that rampageous way, seeing there's no call ! All I want is them young folks. Too many of the household seems bent on flying to *you* at present. Nat'rally, Mr. Vincent objects. He's bound to have some of 'em back. Now hold on, my beauty ! By my soul, I *had* to cut his ropes this morning——"

Without a word she dashed at him, like Nemesis, daughter of Nox. He left his sentence unfinished, and took to his heels. Before he had gone a half-dozen rods, she had him by the nape of the neck.

"You want little Bee, do you ?" she hissed. "And you have the hardihood to come to the Inlet for her ? Ho ! ho ! you're hand and glove with that scoundrel Vincent—he sends you on errands to *me*, eh ?"

For a few moments the firmament seemed falling on Mr. Derby's head. He was thumped and beaten with merciless vigor. Down he went on his knees to the terrible Amazon, whimpering, abjectly :

"Lor', lor', you be a curious female and no mistake, Peg ! Hope I may die if I ever go contrariwise to you again. I tell you I didn't want to cut his ropes, but he made me ! Easy now ! Don't go a-bringing down my gray hairs in sorrer to any more open sepulchres. I didn't know you was a-turning this place into a graveyard, old girl. Let me off, and deuce take me if ever I come a-nigh you again !"

In answer, Nemesis whirled him to his feet and pitched him straight into the muddy, ice-cold creek.

"If you can swim, you're all right!" she cried, derisively; "if you can't, you must drown."

Then she turned and walked away through the wood.

Unfortunately, Mr. Derby could not swim. He struggled and gasped, neck-deep in mud and water, roaring vainly for the dark Amazon to return and help him. To his great relief, he found the tide was ebbing out of the creek, and the overhanging bough of a tree offered him support. He dragged himself to dry land at last, and in a pitiable plight sneaked home to his own cottage, changed his clothes, and went up to the Hall to report his mishaps to the new master.

He found Vincent Hawkstone seated by the drawing-room fire, moodily emptying a bottle of wine. He laughed unpleasantly when he heard Joe's story.

"In the morning, I'll visit that she-fox's den myself," he said, dryly, "and see what *I* can unearth there. Now I want your help in another matter, Derby. Basil Hawkstone probably died intestate—heart-disease doesn't wait for men to arrange money matters—but search must be made at once for a possible will. Come with me to the library—we shall have to intrude there for a space, for if he *has* left a will, it will be found, of course, among his private papers."

They took up a lamp and crossed the hall to the room where lay the dead island lord, his grand, imposing shape mournfully outlined beneath a sheet. At the sight Vincent made a step backward and changed color.

What were the thoughts of his heart at that moment? How did he feel, standing there in that dimly lighted room, staring down at the dead? How does the murderer ever feel in the mute, accusing presence of the murdered? Vincent Hawkstone knew only too well that no heart-disease had killed his cousin. He shook with sudden, guilty fear.

"Great God! How tall he is!" he muttered, using the words of Henry III. when he beheld the slain Guise. "And how terrible he looks, Derby!"

"Oh, lor', sir, you haven't seen him," answered Derby, reassuringly. "His face is as calm as a May morning—not a bit terrible — seems exactly as though he was asleep. Just take a glance, sir," and he moved significantly toward the sheeted shape.

"If you dare to uncover him I'll knock you on the head!" cried Vincent. "Here, hold the lamp and let me look through these drawers and cabinets. He had a great deal of money to leave to somebody—it's a pity that lame brat should have it all."

Derby held the lamp while his new master opened an old Venetian cabinet full of odd little drawers—forcibly breaking such as he found locked, and scattering their contents over the floor. It was a continuation of that work of the morning which Peg Patton had interrupted; but, search as he would, Vincent could find no will.

Prince Lucifer's body had been placed near the old window scratched with the names of Rochambeau's officers. No one had thought to draw the curtain, and the Autumn moonlight slanted weirdly in upon the ancient wainscot and across the rigid figure of the island lord, who could utter no protest now—no accusation, in the presence of his traitorous kinsman.

Presently a slight noise at this same window attracted the attention of Joe Derby. He turned, then gave a bellow of fright, and dropped the lamp from his paralyzed hand.

"Look, sir! for God's sake, look!" he cried, and Vincent Hawkstone looked, and saw, flattened against the glass of the window, and staring in upon him with stony eyes, a human face, as white as the cloth over Prince Lucifer—an awful, rigid, ghastly face, set in wild, wind-blown hair.

Joe rushed blindly for the door; his master followed. They tumbled into the hall together. There they stood, and stared at each other, and which was the paler no man could have told.

"'Twas a ghost, sir!" said Joe Derby, with chattering teeth.

Vincent looked ashamed.

"Stuff! Go back, you fool, and pick up the papers, and bring out the lamp." He gave him a kick to hasten his movements. "I promise you I shall be a severe master, Derby—far harder than Prince Lucifer ever was! No doubt the whole island will wish him back from his grave before a week is over; but"—with a laugh—"you may be sure he will not come! Now step outside and see who's prowling about the house at this hour—and if you find the ghost, bring it to me."

Joe went outside, but not to look for ghosts. His shins ached with Vincent's vigorous kick. He was dejected—disgusted.

"I'll do more of his errands!" he muttered. "My stomach's just turned agin him to-night! By the great horn spoon, he was more frightened than I, or he'd have seen 'twas Miss Ravenel peering into the window to catch a glimpse of her dead sweetheart. She must have felt powerful bad to take such a risk—poor lass! *I* knew her, if he didn't, but I wasn't a-going to tell." And Joe shuffled drearily off to his own cottage.

As for Vincent Hawkstone, his desire to find his cousin's will had suddenly cooled. It was now past midnight. He mounted the shallow stair to the cedar chamber, and threw himself down upon the four-posted bed. Like one raked up in red-hot embers, he tossed from side to side for a while, then sank into an uneasy slumber.

Presently the wan figure of the long-dead Philip Hawkstone, slain in that very room, appeared at the foot of the couch, and spoke to him in the darkness and silence:

"Have you killed and taken possession?" he said.

Vincent's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. He answered nothing.

"You will never be master here," continued the dead Philip, sorrowfully. "Remember, not you, but Basil Hawkstone's sons will inherit after him!" Then the shape dissolved in thin air, and was gone.

Vincent started wildly up. He had been dreaming, of course, but the four walls of the cedar chamber seemed ringing still with the ill-omened words,

"It is this cursed room!" he muttered; "nothing but evil can haunt the sleeper here! Basil Hawkstone is dead, and sons he has none, and I am master already of Tempest Island!"

Dawn was now breaking over the unquiet sea. He went down to the stables, ordered a groom to saddle a horse, and galloped off across the dunes to Peg Patton's Inlet House.

Once in the woods, he looked curiously around for the open grave into which Joe Derby had fallen on the preceding night. He found it, but it was no longer open. Some hand had filled it up, and neatly rounded off a mound, on which a great heap of pretty, parti-colored sea-shells glistened in the early light.

"Looks as though there had been a burial here!" muttered Vincent.

He rode up to Peg's door, and pounded on it with the butt-end of his whip.

"What d'ye want?" demanded the voice of Peg, from within.

"My wife!" answered Vincent.

A chain rattled. The door swung back a few inches, and in the aperture stood Peg, grim as fate, holding in one hand a double-barreled shotgun.

"Turn about, Vincent Hawkstone," she said, sternly, "and ride back to Tempest Hall, for you'll never get Jetta Ravenel, so long as I can stand between you."

"I demand my wife!" shouted Vincent; "the girl that I have lawfully married——"

"Unlawfully, you scoundrel! by the meanest fraud!"

"She is here, and I will have her, or batter your house down about your ears, Peg! I am lord of this island now, and everything upon it—Prince Lucifer can no longer help or avenge her."

"Don't be so sure of that! The dead can avenge, as well as the living. This you may yet learn to your cost!"

He shuddered involuntarily, then glared down at her from the saddle in a transport of rage.

"I demand not only my wife, but Beatrice Hawkstone,

of whom I am now the natural guardian, being her nearest of kin. My cousin's burial will take place to-morrow—the child must attend. What do you mean by hiding her here? Bring her out at once!"

"I'd sooner throw her into the creek!" answered Peg, dryly. "Hurry Basil Hawkstone into his grave, and seize his possessions, but his daughter you will not have; for, by the Lord, I have served the race of Hawkstone too long and well, to turn traitor to the last and weakest of them in an hour like this."

He swung himself out of the saddle.

"Open that door!" he roared. "Do you think I will accept *you* as a go-between, hag? I'm coming in there to see the child, and to have speech with my wife."

Peg cocked her gun.

"I'll send you to find Prince Lucifer the moment your foot touches the threshold!" she cried.

A slim hand drew the brown woman gently to one side. Jetta Ravenel slipped suddenly into Peg's place, and looked out through the opening at the wild young scamp who claimed her as his wife.

His voice died in his throat—he stared at her blankly. Prince Lucifer, dead at Tempest Hall, had no whiter face! The lightning-stroke of an awful grief had quenched all hope, all joy, in the great tearless eyes, and put strange, stony lines about the soft young lips. It was a changed, unrecognizable Jetta who stood there with the dignity of a supreme sorrow upon her, her pale face shining starlike in its cloud of raven hair—looking out on Vincent as though she saw him not.

"Great God! Jetta!" he gasped; and then, with a burst of passion: "I see! You have been mourning for Basil—you are heart-broken at his sudden taking-off——you are now sorry, perhaps, that you ever refused to marry him?"

"Yes!" she answered, in a hard, cold voice; "from my soul, I am sorry!"

"Well, a dead rival need trouble no man! Come to me, Jetta!—come, and be lady of Tempest Hall. No woman was ever loved as you shall be loved—set your foot on

my neck, if you like—do with me as you will—I am hopelessly in your power—even my sins have been committed for your sake. I have periled my very soul for you. Are you a woman, Jetta Ravenel, and have you no pity for me ?—do you not see that you are driving me mad ?"

He was gazing at her wonderful white beauty with devouring eyes. An agony of yearning appeared in his handsome, reckless face. He *had* done all manner of evil, in the hope of gaining possession of her, and as yet it had availed nothing—she was further away from him than ever.

"Come, Jetta !" he urged, tenderly ; "and bring little Bee with you. Every foot of this island is mine—every house upon it. I can force an entrance here at any moment—do not goad me to do things which I might hereafter regret—which you, perhaps, would never forgive. You cannot escape me—you cannot leave the island, for I have taken possession of every boat upon it, even to the one belonging to Peg, which, I dare say, she has already missed from the creek. Come back to Tempest Hall ! What is my inheritance—what is life itself without you ? Jetta, my darling, come !"

He held out his impassioned arms to her. She looked at him in stony horror.

"I deny you to your face !" she answered. "I am not your wife. Never, on this side of the grave, shall you have either Basil Hawkstone's daughter or the woman that Basil Hawkstone loved. When you lay him in the grave to-morrow, remember this : my heart will be there with him—you will bury with him all that is vital of *me* —youth, hope, happiness, love ! In spite of your efforts to prevent it, I shall soon be able to leave this island, Vincent Hawkstone, and place Bee in the care of friends. Do not come near me again—do not dare to claim me again, for never will I consent to see or speak to you more."

She vanished from the opening in the door, and Peg Patton stepped into her place. As Vincent stood grasping the bridle of his horse, the brown woman raised her

gun and sent a shot flying straight through the crown of his hat.

"That's my warning to you, sir—heed it!" she said, grimly; then the door banged, a chain rattled, and Peg's fortress was again closed and silent.

Vincent looked at the hole in his hat, and though he was in a towering passion, he threw himself into the saddle again, and beat a retreat down the path by the creek. Prince Lucifer dead was already taking bitter vengeance on his successor.

"Let me get him into his grave as quickly as may be," muttered Vincent, "and after that I will see what can be done with this Peg Patton and her *protégées*."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN THE TOMB.

In mist and storm dawned Basil Hawkstone's burial-day.

The brown leaves lay in sodden heaps at Peg Patton's barred door—a vail of fog hid woods and rainy creek. Inside the house little Bee and Jetta Ravenel sat by Peg's fire, one weeping in childish *abandon*, the other tearless as stone.

"In some way, by some means, I must leave the island to-night," said Miss Ravenel to Peg, "and take Sarah and the child with me."

"I can row you over to Whithaven myself," answered Peg; "that is, if I can find a boat. What will you do when you get to the mainland, miss?"

"Go first to Basil Hawkstone's lawyer and lay Bee's case before him, and demand justice and protection for the child."

"Right. In Vincent's hands her life is not worth a rush. He wants her share of the Hawkstone fortune as well as his own."

"Then," mused Jetta, drearily, "I will fare back to Madame Moreau's school, and there seek a situation as teacher. Bee shall go with me—we will never be parted again," and she strained the weeping child to her side.

"But first of all, help us to escape from Tempest Island, Peggy—this is our pressing, our immediate need.'

"True enough," growled Peg. "I shall not be able to protect you long, in spite of the shotgun and the strong door. Vincent Hawkstone knows his own power and our weakness—I take it that's the reason he doesn't level the house at once. Yes, you and the child must go, and Sarah with you. The fog is in our favor—it will help to hide us. But we must wait till the burial is over, for with all the people out on the island we would run great risks of being seen and intercepted."

The afternoon was fast waning when, through fog and rain, the muffled sound of a funeral bell reached the anxious women in the Inlet House.

One by one it tolled the years of Basil Hawkstone's life. Bee buried her small, wan face in Jetta's lap. Sarah threw her apron over her head and sobbed. Miss Ravenel, dumb and white, listened, and gave no sign that every clang of that brazen clapper was like a knife turning in her heart.

"Miss Ravenel," said little Bee, "must I go away without seeing papa once more? If Sarah could hide me somewhere—so that Vincent would not know—and let me look at him for just one minute, I would be content."

Jetta pressed the child closer.

"The night that your papa died," she shuddered, "I stole up to the Hall after Sarah had brought me the dreadful news. I tried to catch a glimpse of him through the library-window, but—but somebody frightened me away. Oh, my dear, you have spoken the desire of my own heart. We *will* see him!"—with sudden resolution—"we could not leave Tempest Island without that last poor comfort. We will surely look on Basil Hawkstone's face before we go."

"If you attempt that," said Peg, warningly, "it will be at great peril to yourself."

"We will do it because we *must*, Peggy," answered Jetta, mournfully, and the brown woman said no more.

As darkness fell, Miss Ravenel donned her outer

garments; Sarah prepared a bundle of necessities, and dressed Bee for a journey; Peg slipped on a dreadnaught coat, and tied a man's tarpaulin over her ears; then a lantern was lighted, the coals raked together on the hearth, the lamp extinguished and the little company went out and left the Inlet House deserted in the darkness.

Into the forest they plunged, Sarah hiding the lantern under her shawl, and Peg bearing Bee in her stout arms. The cold mist hung heavy on the dunes, the sea roared at the foot of the low cliffs.

Jetta turned her face toward the island churchyard, and the others followed.

"I am going to the Hawkstone tomb," said the girl.

"So I suspected," answered Peg, dryly; "but first I must get the key for you."

From the church-gate Tempest Hall could be seen through the mist, all its lower windows blazing with light, as if for some festival.

"Mr. Vincent is having a jubilee, *I* should say," muttered Sarah. "Oh, lor', how scandalous, and the poor master buried only just before sunset!"

On the opposite side of the road stood Joe Derby's cottage.

"You three wait here a bit till I go and speak to Joe," said Peg.

And, boldly opening the cottage-door, she looked into a kitchen, where Derby, absorbed in unpleasant thoughts, sat disconsolately smoking his clay pipe by a dying fire.

"I want the key to the Hawkstone tomb!" said Peg, peremptorily. "Give it to me, and ask no questions! What's going on at Tempest Hall to-night? Is Vincent illuminating for his cousin's death?"

Joe gave a nervous jump, but he meekly took a key from his mantel, and put it in Peg's hand.

"What's going on at the Hall?" he faltered. "Why, the worst sort of a carouse, Peggy! A lot of wild blades have come over from Whithaven to-night to riot with the new master."

"And what part have *you* taken in all this devil's busi-

ness ?" cried Peg. "Shame on you, Joe Derby ! No wonder you slink back and hang your head ! Now, man, I'm going to give you a chance to wipe out your past sins. Is there a boat at the landing-place ?"

"Lor', yes," said Joe, faintly ; "that Whithaven lot came in boats, of course."

"Very well. We'll have to borrow one for a while. I want you to help me to take two or three persons over to Whithaven. It's thick weather, and I'm anxious to land 'em safely. You know how to manage a boat even in the dark, so come along !"

Joe struggled promptly into his hat and coat.

"I'd be proper glad to serve you in any way, Peggy," he answered, penitently. "Oh, lor', I never dreamed Mr. Vincent was a-going to cut up so—drinking and playing cards and dice, and raging generally, like a wild bull of Ba-han. I'll quit the island myself to-morrow—I can't abide him longer. Whatever are you going to do with the key to the tomb ?"

"I told you to ask no questions," said Peg, shortly. "Come with me."

She led him to the churchyard-gate, where Jetta waited with Sarah and little Bee. They all went in by a freshly trampled path, and Peg with her own hand unlocked the Hawkstone vault.

"Watch here," she commanded Joe, "while I go inside with Miss Ravenel, and mind that you give us prompt notice if you hear anybody coming."

"All right," assented Joe, and he took his stand at the tomb-door with Sarah, while Peg and Jetta Ravenel descended into the vault. The lantern shone weirdly on the damp walls and over the tiers of coffins. Bee clung to her governess's skirts in wonder and affright, as Peg Patton went up to a casket which had been freshly deposited in that abode of death, and which bore a silver plate engraved with Basil Hawkstone's name, and the date of his decease.

The brown woman unscrewed the lid, and Jetta advanced with the child, and, by the light of the lantern which Peg held aloft, looked once more on the face of

her lost lover. A calm, peaceful face, not wasted by disease, but with all the splendid beauty of life still upon it, as if sleep, not death, possessed him. Peg lifted Bee, and allowed the child to look her fill. Then both drew back and left the dead to Jetta.

With a cry of utter despair, the unhappy girl threw herself on the coffin, and laid her face upon her lover's. Life to death !—hot lips to icy ones, burning kisses falling like fire on unresponsive marble, tears raining wildly on sealed eyelids, passionate arms clasping senseless clay, love struggling vainly with the awful mystery of death—that old tragedy, for ever new, which has agonized the world since creation began !

"Basil !" she prayed, with the madness of a grief beyond reason ; "oh, my love, my love, come back to me once more !"

Can the dead hear the voice of the living, and answer ? Can love work the miracle of new life in that which is not ? A tremor seemed to pass suddenly over the dead form in the coffin—surely there was a spasmodic movement of the facial muscles under her hot tears and kisses. In life he had loved her madly, and now, when her voice called in that dreary vault, the semblance of death which held him dissolved like frost in the sun. His eyes flashed wide open on the white, agonized face of the woman he loved. The terrible spell of catalepsy, in which Basil Hawkstone had been bound for so many hours, snapped and released its victim. Life came rushing back upon him in a full flood-tide. There, in the Hawkstone tomb, which a woman's love had thus cheated of its latest prey, the island lord started up in his coffin, and the voice of him "that was dead" answered the voice of the living : "Jetta ! Oh, my darling, I am here—I am here !"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

FACE TO FACE.

Trance or catalepsy—it was over !

If the terrible shock produced by news of her marriage had indeed brought about that sudden and death-like

suspension of the action of the senses and of volition, her kisses had saved, and her voice recalled him to life!

Peg Patton and Derby carried him to the latter's cottage, gave him food and wine, warmed him at a generous fire, ministered unto him with eager hands.

"Miss Ravenel," said Peg, solemnly, "if you hadn't insisted on seeing him again, he must have perished in the tomb."

Speechless, overwhelmed, Jetta sat by the side of the man she loved, and held his hand, and looked into the face which had come back to her from the shadows of the grave.

"I have had a horrible dream!" he shuddered. "I thought some one told me that you had married Vincent—it was frightfully real!"

"Nothing is real," she answered, wildly; "nothing—except that you have returned to me from death!"

* * * * * *

Up at Tempest Hall, Vincent Hawkstone, the new master, was holding a wild, disgraceful orgy—a wicked, riotous feast of "funeral baked meats" and wines unearthed from the cobwebs and dust of half a century's rest in the Hall cellar.

For hours the revel had been in progress—it was now nearly midnight, but the uproar and confusion in the great dining-room continued unabated—to the consternation of Mrs. Otway and the servants, who were huddled in the kitchen, as the island sheep were wont to huddle on the moors in time of sudden tempest.

"They're bound to make a night of it," said Anne, the maid, "and what they'll do before morning the Lord alone can tell!"

An open fire of hickory wood warmed the room, and cast strange lights and shadows on the wainscot—on the family portraits, and over the faces of the half-dozen men who made up the precious company.

Fragments of glasses strewed the floor, wild songs rang up to the rafters. The feast had been swept off the table, and the feasters were now deep in play. Dice rattled, cards flew. All sorts of valuables strewed the board—

watches, rings, money. Vincent Hawkstone, pale, turbulent, disheveled, was roaring out in wild chorus, and shaking the dice-box in the face of his law partner, Dudley, whose eyes had grown vacant, and his utterance thick, under the influence of old wine.

"By Jove! Vincent," he stammered, "I fancied we had good cause to be merry with you to-night, because every mother's son of us held your I O U. But luck's turned, it seems. You've won the paper all back. Faith, we'll not have even our coats to wear to Whithaven if we stay here longer."

Vincent's wild, handsome face grew wilder yet.

"Yes, by Heaven! luck *has* turned!" he cried. "When I met with you last I was an impecunious devil, up to my eyes in debts of honor. To-night I am lord of Tempest Island, and, I may add, of the whole Hawkstone fortune."

"But Prince Lucifer has left a daughter," said a voice at the end of the table.

"A sickly, puny brat, who cannot outlast her childhood!" sneered Vincent.

An envious sigh went round the board.

"Then, all that's lacking here to-night is the wife you've married," stuttered Dudley; "the handsome Southern girl. Gad! she *was* a beauty! And pledged to your cousin, too. You were always trespassing on his preserves—winging his game, you know! Now, where's the bride? Really, we insist upon seeing the bride! Where are you hiding her? Why do we find you widowed as soon as wed? My word! It's like

"The Lord of Nain and his lady fair,"

who

"In early youth united were—
In early youth divided were!"

Vincent's flushed face grew thunderous. He knocked the top off a fresh bottle of wine and sent its red contents splashing, like blood, the entire length of the table.

"Look out what you say!" he cried, hoarsely. "There

are private matters which you cannot safely mention here, you drunken idiot!"

Dudley, always quarrelsome in his cups, answered, with a sneer:

"Tut, man! don't attempt to bully *me*. I carried your letters, remember, to that pretty circus-rider, Mademoiselle Zephyr, over in Whithaven. I sha'n't hesitate to swear that something deuced queer was mixed up in your marriage with the governess—something that you will find awkward to explain. She refuses to share your new honors—eh? To-night she makes herself conspicuous by her absence? By my soul, she's a girl of spirit! Well, Fortune must stop somewhere—you can't expect to receive *all* her favors, man!"

Vincent seized a chair and felled the speaker to the floor. Instantly the whole company started up on unsteady legs. Some one swept the stakes off the board, and the lamps also. There was a fresh crash of glasses and bottles as the table itself was overturned in the midst of the turmoil. At that moment a clock in the hall struck the hour of twelve.

The lamps were all out.

"Give us torches," shouted a voice, "and let us illuminate, in honor of Vincent's succession to the sovereignty of Tempest Island!"

With a shout the wine-crazed lot rushed to the hearth, each seizing a brand, which trailed a comet's-tail of red sparks across the room. Directly the servants in the kitchen became aware that some new catastrophe had occurred by a cloud of dense black smoke and the sound of crackling flame which burst through the passages into their quarters.

"Merciful Heaven! Have they set fire to the Hall?" cried Mrs. Otway. "Run to the church, some of you, and ring the bell for help."

Immediately the deep, ominous tones of the bell boomed through the cold mist across the moors and beaches, startling the islanders from their beds, and waking the echoes in Joe Derby's cottage, where Basil Hawkstone and his little company of faithful ones had

found shelter. Before the island folks fairly gathered the flames were bursting from the old, historic house, spreading a wild, uncanny glare through the sky, and lighting for miles the foggy headlands and lonely expanse of moor. It was an illumination, indeed—such as Vincent's drunken comrades had not thought of. Far out to sea streamed the ruddy glare. The sailor might behold it, shining about his watery way—the watchman in Whithaven would wonder at that portentous light in the midnight sky. On its wooded slope, Tempest Hall stood up, a huge beacon of destruction, its great timbers shriveling like willow wands, its paneled chambers red with forked flames. The islanders, flying half dressed to the scene of disaster, found themselves unable to save or to help, so swiftly had the torches of the revelers done their work. Some one darted into the chasm of fire, where the dining-room once was, and dragged out the singed body of Dudley. Most of his comrades also had staggered into the garden, but Vincent was not with them.

"In the Lord's name, where is Mr. Vincent?" cried one of the servants; "he will surely be burned alive!"

In the front rank of the crowd which had gathered about the doomed Hall, stood Peg Patton, gazing sternly into that huge furnace.

"Where's the young scoundrel?" she demanded; "in *there?*" pointing to the house.

One of the rioters answered the brown woman:

"He went up-stairs to put a torch in the cedar chamber—he hasn't come down. In God's name," he continued, "why don't these island boors go in and save him? Look! look!"

At a window of the cedar chamber, curtained now with smoke and fire, a human figure suddenly appeared and stood for a moment in plain view of the crowd below. It was Vincent Hawkstone.

His face was deadly pale, and it wore a dazed, stupefied look. The islanders shouted to him, wildly:

"The porch!—step out on the stone porch, sir, and we'll save you!"

He did not seem to hear. The handsome, reckless face

with the red-brown curls and the wild blue eyes stared blankly out through the gray, curling smoke, then fell back and vanished.

With a cry, Peg Patton dashed into the burning house, followed by a man whom the crowd, in the general confusion, had not yet noticed.

"Go back, sir!" implored Peg; "don't *you* venture here - don't risk your life for the ingrate that has injured you in every way possible. No! no! this is too much! See, the stair is all ablaze—you can't go up."

"He has injured me, God knows, but I cannot leave him to burn, like a rat in a hole!" answered Basil Hawkstone, pushing her gently, but firmly, aside, and shot up the stair.

Flames roared about him. Strong timbers cracked and swayed. Blinded, half suffocated, he reached the landing. Bursting, like a spectre, from the black smoke-shroud of the staircase, he, at its top, came suddenly face to face with his cousin, Vincent Hawkstone.

For one awful, never-to-be-forgotten moment, the two, wrapped about in darting, quivering fire, stood and looked at each other. An appalling fear—a horror unspeakable—appeared in Vincent's guilty eyes.

"Prince Lucifer!" he cried, hoarsely. "God above! How came you here? You are dead!—I saw you buried—I know you are dead, *for I killed you!*"

Out came the confession, with a wild, remorseful cry.

"*You* killed me?" echoed Basil Hawkstone, sternly. "When—how?"

"At Whithaven—that night of Mademoiselle Zephyr's marriage. The wine she gave you—there was death in it—poison enough to have ended a half-dozen lives! Keep off! keep off! You have come from the grave to take vengeance on me!"

"Hold, Vincent! Mademoiselle gave me no wine. There is some mistake. Did she let you think that you had murdered me?"

"Yes, yes!" he fairly shrieked. "She swore that you drank it, and I followed you to Whithaven, knowing that you would die by the time you reached this door."

"Vincent, you are beside yourself! The crime of my murder has been spared you. I am not dead, but alive. Feel my hand—I am here to save you——"

But with a yell of fear, that rose over all the roar of the flames, Vincent Hawkstone leaped past the man he had tried to kill, and flung himself headlong down the burning stair into the pit of fire below!

Prince Lucifer rushed after him, seized and dragged him out of the house.

A cry of amazement burst from the islanders, as they saw emerging from the burning Hall, singed with flame and blackened with smoke, the master whom they had just buried in the Hawkstone vault, with Vincent supported in his arms.

Even before he laid his kinsman on the ground, Prince Lucifer knew that life was extinct. That mad plunge down the staircase had broken his neck.

Peg Patton bent over him, and felt for the pulse that had ceased to beat.

"He's gone, sir," she said to the island lord, who knelt beside the inert body, in full view of all the people gathered around. "His accounts are closed up!"

Basil Hawkstone rose, and turned on the awed and breathless islanders the grand, authoritative face which they knew and loved so well.

"It is I, friends!" he said. "Do not be afraid of me—it is I, and not a spirit! I have come back to you from the grave."

And then, as they crowded tumultuously about him, servants and dependents, forgetting even the burning Hall in their unbounded joy and amazement, Peg Patton spread a cloth over Vincent Hawkstone's dead face—over the fear and remorse still stamped upon it, and, aided by Joe Derby, bore him away from the trampling feet of the crowd.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

FINIS.

A YEAR had passed away. Far off in Continental Europe—in Vienna on the Danube, a young and beau-

tiful woman—an *equestrienne*, whose fame was in all men's mouths—had just met a sudden and violent death in the circus-ring.

A feat of unusual daring—a false step, occas maybe, by the intoxicating applause—a fall—an iron hoof set in the white forehead, a rain of blood-drops on the yellow hair, and the triumphs of Jasper Hatton's fair young wife were over for ever.

The news traveled across the sea, and reached the drawing-room of a brown-stone front on Fifth Avenue, one night, in the late October, when the rain was out, and wild wind abroad.

"And so Mademoiselle Zephyr's career is over!" said George Sutton, as he thoughtfully smoothed the tiger-skin that was spread across his knees.

Miss Rokewood, in a deep *fauteuil* on the other side of a delightful wood-fire, looked up with serious eyes. Her blonde face wore graver, sadder lines than when we saw it last. A favorite dog lay beside her on a Kurdistân rug—she patted his shaggy head, and answered:

"I believe that such love as that woman had to give, was given, after all, to Basil Hawkstone. Even her marriage with Hatton was a matter of spite. She was a paradox—she hated Prince Lucifer and she loved him."

"God forbid that we should see her like again!" shuddered Sutton. "She made mischief enough in her short day—for you and me, as well as for others, Doris!"

"Yes," assented Miss Rokewood, and then both looked gravely into the sparkling wood-fire.

"Well, let bygones be bygones," growled Sutton, at last. "Hawkstone has wellnigh completed a second Tempest Hall on the site of the old one. If this new abode lacks historic interest, it will, at least, possess none of the tragic associations of the former house, and I a n sure my secretary will find fewer ghosts and goblins in it."

The words were hardly out, when the mahogany door swung back on its heavy hinges, and Jetta Ravenel, who had served George Sutton as secretary for the past year, glided into the apartment.

The two by the fire made room for her. She was dressed in plain black, and her rich Southern beauty had suffered nothing from the trials of the past.

"My dear," said Sutton, gravely, "we have received news to-night. The woman who destroyed Gabriel is no more." And he read aloud the cablegram.

There was a moment of silence. Miss Rokewood's hand closed tenderly upon Jetta's.

"As one looks back upon it," sighed the blonde heiress, "how like a ghastly dream it all seems!"

The tears glistened on Jetta's long lashes.

"Ah, there are pleasant things mixed with the sad ones," she answered. "Can I forget how you hastened to the Inlet House to find me, after the burning of Tempest Hall? How you brought me to your own home—how Mr. Sutton received me with unspeakable kindness, and made me his private secretary, in my poor, wretched Gabriel's place?"

"Pooh!" growled Sutton; "that only shows my superior judgment, for you have been the most faithful and industrious of the craft. Now that your year of decorous retirement is over, and Basil Hawkstone, on his

"'Lone little isle,'

grows impatient, and swears that his claims shall no longer be set aside, the question that appalls me is, Where shall I find another like you?"

She looked at him

"With a smile on her lip, and a tear in her eye,"

like the young female in "Lochinvar."

"You are very good—" she began to say, when a footman opened the door and announced Basil Hawkstone.

In came the island lord, strong, bronzed, imposing, not at all like a man who had been buried alive, and escaped death, as by a miracle, only one short year before.

"I see," said Sutton, as he looked up into the face of his friend, "you, too, have heard from Vienna?"

"Yes," replied Hawkstone, gravely. "It was a short life and a merry one. The fame for which she was ready

to sacrifice all things earthly will outlast her how long? A week—a month, maybe!"

He gave his hand to Jetta and Miss Rokewood. The latter arose soon after and said:

"It still lacks a half-hour to dinner. I have time to visit Juno, who is ill to-day, and I will take Mr. Sutton with me. For my sake, he can tolerate even a sick monkey."

Ward and guardian went out of the drawing-room, and left the lovers standing together before the fire.

He let his gray eyes dwell for a space on her black-robed figure and pale, drooping face, then he said, gravely:

"I have come for you, Jetta!"

The color rushed into her soft cheek.

"The new Hall is completed," he went on. "It lacks nothing now but a mistress. I bring you urgent messages from Mrs. Otway, from our good friend, Peg Patton, and from little Bee—they all desire exceedingly your return to the Tempest. For a year you have been Vincent's widow—is not that long enough? Have we not suffered enough, Jetta?"

She was in his arms before the last words were out.

"Yes, yes," she faltered, "I am yours! Take me back to the dear, gray island, Basil—I love no other place as well."

They were married a week later, and went away to their little kingdom in the sea, and George Sutton was again left without a secretary.

"I have lost Miss Ravenel," he said to his ward, "and soon I shall lose you, also. You have a score of lovers—at no distant day you will choose one from the many, and I shall be left sick, miserable and alone."

She shook her head.

"I shall never leave you, guardy—I am done with lovers."

"Fiddlesticks!" he scoffed. "I hope you are not wasting your heart on the memory of Gabriel Ravenel!"

"No, indeed!" she answered; "that episode seems immensely far away. It tires me now to recall it."

"And is there no other for whom you care, Doris?" he urged.

"None but you, guardy," she answered, with placid sweetness. "I mean to stay with you, and take care of you so long as we both live."

Into his thin, yellow face flashed a swift brightness. He leaned toward her over the arm of his invalid-chair.

"You cannot do that without inviting much comment. Being a selfish fellow, I would fain hold you by stronger chains, Doris; but how can I—how dare I ask a vigorous young creature like you to give up her life to a querulous, exacting invalid? Ah, no, I must not; I will not, even though you are the only thing that I love in all the world!"

With a little tremor in her voice, a little shifting color in her cheek, she answered:

"I shall stay with you till you drive me away, guardy, whether you condescend to ask me or not."

He lifted her face and looked into her calm, serious eyes.

"Then stay, as my wife, child, not as my ward!"

She put her strong young hand in his weak, nervous one.

"Just as you please, guardy," she answered, serenely; "your wishes are mine."

So, to the infinite astonishment of society, Doris Rokewood married her sick guardian.

When the test of time had been applied to the strange union, the world was forced to admit that the two were singularly happy—absurdly devoted to each other. Away in seagirt Tempest Hall, Jetta Hawkstone, with a fair little son at her knee, said to her husband:

"And why should they not be happy? Life cannot be a frenzy and a fever to all of us."

"True," he answered, and bent and covered her face with his swift kisses.

THE END.

American Series.

75 Abbey Murder. Hatton.
220 Alas. Broughton.
217 All Sorts and Conditions of Men. Besant.
25 Allan Quatermain. Haggard.
149 Allan's Wife. Haggard.
234 American Girl in London. Duncan.
230 American Notes. Kipling.
283 Amethyst. Coleridge.
319 Andree de Taverney. Dumas
182 April's Lady. Duchess.
6 Ardath. Corelli.
71 Aristocrat in America, An.
187 Armorel of Lyonesse Besant
262 Artificial Fate, An. Boutelle
166 Artist and Model. Pont-Jest.
100 As in a Looking-Glass. Phillips.
342 At the Green Dragon. Harraden.
281 Auld Licht Idylls. Barrie.
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